

N A D I R:

A

DRAMATIC

P O E M.

By the Rev. JOSEPH WISE. *K*

L O N D O N:

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ADVERTISEMENT.

SEVERAL parts of this Poem are agreeable to History; particularly the Character of NADIR, and the manner of his death. However, in justice to that remarkable man, I chuse the reader should be apprised, that he was not that monstrous tyrant, as here, and in some histories of his life, he is represented. One may observe, in reading the most unfavourable accounts of him, several instances of extraordinary Justice and Generosity, considering his circumstances, which will induce one to think, he was far from being the worst character among men: And I find by the account of Mr. Ives, who travelled thro' Persia not long ago, that, NADIR was a wise and magnanimous Prince; and would have govern'd with mildness and equity, if the disorders of the times and the wickedness of the people would have permitted him. He was driven to cruelties, in his own defence; and obliged to be constantly at war, not only to repel invasions and crush rebellions; but to keep the restless people employ'd, that they might be diverted from greater mischiefs.

PER.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA. ADVERTISEMENT.

M E N.

NADIR, Shah (or Emperor) of Persia.

BASHI,
SALEH, } Persian Generals.

ABDUL,
NIZAM, } Tartar Generals.

MYRZA, Captive Prince of Georgia.

PATRIARCH of Georgia. Captive.

AMUR, Messenger from Ali.

W O M E N.

ZARA, The favourite Lady of Nadir's Harram.

CIRCASSIA, A Georgian Lady ; Captive.

Eunuchs, Slaves, Soldiers, &c.

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N A D I R,

A D R A M A T I C P O E M.

A C T I.

S C E N E, THE PERSIAN CAMP.

Enter BASHI and SALEH.

SALEH.

BASHI, we Persians now indeed are slaves!
Abject as bondmen in our native land!
Our tyrant, *Nadir*, sets these vile barbarians,
These earth-born Tartars, to be spies upon us,
Informers and assassins: Open day,
To our disgrace, demonstrates them his fav'rites:
With them he chiefly shares his social pleasures;
With them communicates his inmost counsels;
With them decides upon the fate of Persians:
While us, his natural subjects, best entitled
To all regards, he treats with mere illusion.
Is this supportable?—Might some choice vengeance
Sweep off this monster from the groaning land,
Of all that's mine I vow the tenths to *Mecca*!

BASHI.

Your vows want hands,
More than *Briarean*, to redress our wrongs.

B

Patience,

Patience, good friend, and caution ! These are best.
 Young eagles, that too boldly venture forth
 From their close eyries, on unfledged wings,
 Fall among dogs and hunters on the plain ;
 So we, if rash, among our foes must fall,
 To rage and scorn a miserable prey.
 Deliverance, let us hope, is drawing on ;
 Engines of pow'rful moment are in motion
 To work the fall of *Nadir*.

SALEH.

The confederates
 Want mutual confidence, want faithful instruments ;
 Hardly will they proceed to execution.
 Nothing, but some fortunate concurrence
 Of common interest and common danger,
 Just in the nick of opportune occasion,
 Will ever join their forces. Their success
 Depends on rare contingents. *Nadir's* wealth
 Still fortifies his state.

BASHI.

The Tartar, *Abdul* !
 He bends this way. Methinks his hasty manner
 Denotes some weighty business. Hear his tidings :
 He comes full fraught.

SALEH.

My soul detests the Tartar. [Exit Saleh.]

BASHI.

What news, great Tartar Chief ? Is all secure ?
 We dread the worst in these flagitious times.
 While Treason and Rebellion still renew,
 Like fabled Hydra, their invenom'd heads,
 We almost fancy even a cloud-cast shade,

That

That skims the mountain-side, a rebel host.
 The winds resounding in the hollow rocks,
 We start, we halt, and listen with surprize;
 For in our ears, so frequently alarm'd
 By martial din, the noise resembles war.

ABDUL.

This moment, *Bashi*, did we dread a foe,
 Our host might tremble as the reedy groves
 Among the breezy solitudes of *Amo*;
 For, East and West, Rebellion's up in arms.
 But *Nadir*'s banners are a shield of brass:
 His sabre polish'd as a lucid fountain,
 With jewels glowing like the starry night,
 And bearing fate on its resistless edge,
 Is still invincible. He leads us on
 To certain victory and boundless spoil:
 Witness the conquest of the wealthy East.
 I see, methinks, ev'n now, on *Delhi*'s walls
 Our ensigns wave in aromatic air,
 Glittering proudly to the wondering Sun;
 While India's Lord his useless pomp resigns,
 Lays down his diadem, and prostrate falls
 To kiss the dust of conquering *Nadir*'s feet.
 The Turkish Sultan shudders on his throne;
 For *Xerxes* is reviv'd in mighty *Nadir*.

BASHI.

Long live our monarch, conqueror of the world!
 The precious jewel which erewhile was fallen
 Out of the brilliant ring of fame and glory,
 God has restored in the name of *Nadir*.

ABDUL.

On looking up to his embellish'd throne,
 He seems a dread Divinity, his eye

Dispensing life in smiles, and death in frowns ;
 We need implore no Deity but him,
 Of sublunary fates the grand disposer :
 Before his guardian presence dangers vanish ;
 His slaves are happy in his sacred shade.

BASHI.

As yet his mighty genius yields protection ;
 But, noble friend, great as he is, he's mortal.
 Almost unnumber'd enemies surround him,
 Wishing his fall, and watching for the spoil
 Of his vast pow'r and riches : just as birds
 And beasts of prey surround a wounded lion,
 Rejoicing savagely to hear his groans,
 And eager for his moment of expiring.
 I think you said, Rebellion's up in arms ?

ABDUL.

The fact's too certain. All the realm is ripe
 For insurrection and intestine broils.
Bashi, what then ? The Shah has been victorious
 Over more numerous and potent foes.
 His nephew *Ali*, gone to aid the Khan
 Commanding in the East, will soon reduce
 The rebel *Abdollees*. And in the West
 The Shah in person either will subdue
 Those that persist, or, god-like, render pardon
 To those that vow submission. At the worst,
 We still have Tartars, hords of hardy Tartars,
 Enow to cover *Persia* at a call,
 Able to prop the majesty of *Nadir*.

BASHI.

If *Nadir* dies !——

ABDUL.

ABDUL.

Oh, then we have an *Ali*.———
 For toils and dangers, and success in war,
Nadir hath been the *David* of the Persians :
 For wisdom and prosperity, we hope,
Ali will be the *Solomon* in peace.
 Under his auspices shall arts revive ;
 Plenty diffuse her treasures on our plains ;
 Trade crowd our towns, and splendor crown our cities :
 Commerce augmented, glad shall hoist her sails,
 And round the liquid globe, rich laden, voyage.
 All nations then will court some boon of *Persia* ;
 The weak protection ask ; the strong, alliance :
 All languages shall name, all tribes revere
Ali the great, successor to great *Nadir*.

BASHI.

He prophesies !
 What lying spirit, Goodness ! has inspir'd him ? [*Aside*.

ABDUL.

How, *Bashi* ?—What ?

BASHI.

May God, I say, inspire him
 To be indeed what we so zealous wish him !

Enter Nizam.

NIZAM.

Each hour comes loaden with bad tidings : *Ali*,
 Commission'd to reduce the *Abdollees*,
 Has join'd his forces with the crafty Khan,
 Commanding in the Eastern frontiers, and
 Flatly refuses to obey the Shah.

B 3

BASHI.

No news to me !

BASHI.

[*Aside.*

Astonishing !

ABDUL.

Good heaven !

BASHI.

ABDUL.

Foolish ingratitude ! Madness extreme ! ———
Ali rebel against his uncle, *Nadir* !
 The heir apparent overturn the throne
 He hopes to occupy ! It cannot be !
 'Tis lifting up his arm against his head,
 And cutting off the limbs that should support him.

NIZAM.

'Tis over true.

BASHI.

Incredible !

ABDUL.

'Tis false !

NIZAM.

Already join'd by formidable numbers :
 The royal army scarcely reckons more.

BASHI.

'Tis only rumour ; an opprobrious tale !
 The spurious issue of some doating brain,
 That weakly propagates its hopes or fears.
 Such false alarms are frequent in a land,
 Which every moment dreads or wishes change.

Faithful

Faithful intelligence scarce finds the way.
 Since the tempestuous fiery storm of war
 Has sunk our towns in ashes, and our fields
 Made one uncultur'd desert, arts and toil
 Have fled to forests, skulk'd in rocks and caves ;
 While rains descend and seasons smile in vain :
 The peasants live by robbery and stealth ;
 Ev'n Afric's wilds are travell'd more securely,
 Where beasts and serpents lurk in every bush,
 Than, at this juncture, *Persia's* broad highways.

NIZAM.

Amur, just now arriv'd from *Ali's* camp,
 Not only brings the news ; but likewise bears
 Dispatches to the Shah. The young aspirer
 Solicits some conditions.

ABDUL.

Save the Shah ! ———
 To stand the shock of such unnatural baseness
 He should be adamant. His bitterest foes
 Are those of his own blood ; and whom his care
 And kind indulgence foster'd into greatness.

NIZAM.

Base is the nephew ; baser was the son :
 The Shah's own son, his very fav'rite son,
Riza, distinguish'd as the royal heir,
Riza, caress'd and crown'd with golden honors,
 Assail'd his father's life. The nephew's guilt
 Is black indeed ; but that which stain'd the son
 Had blacker horror.

BASHI.

Black as *Tartarus*, *Nizam* !

B 4

ABDUL.

ABDUL.

His blackness was with blackness recompens'd.
He took a foretaste from his father's hand
Of hell's dread attributes, of pain and darkness :
His father bor'd his eyes out.

BASHI.

Riza was stubborn to provoke his fate :
When led a convict to his father's presence,
The Shah, with all the anguish of a parent,
Bewail'd himself, and then bewail'd his son,
His son and then himself :
In piercing tones of agony he cry'd,
“ *Riza*, my son, consider——O consider !
“ I am your General, Sovereign, Friend and Father ;
“ Think on the duties those relations claim.
“ Reflect how little of you I require ;
“ Only what's ow'd to those combin'd relations.
“ You're in my pow'r ; but wou'd I have you perish ?
“ No !——Live, my son ! be happy !——And, when
“ Providence
“ Calls me from this existence, be a King.”

ABDUL.

What said the youth ?

BASHI.

With stern disdain reply'd,
“ You are a tyrant, and deserve to die.
“ I know your worst, and I despise it !——Kill me !”

NIZAM.

How must that answer wound the parent's heart ?

BASHI.

Yes, noble Tartars ; villanies like these

Have

Have me convinc'd, that not a crime is possible,
But mortal man will do it.

[Exit.

ABDUL.

Persian dog !

Himself for hire would murder child or parent—

His dearest friend— The man who risk'd his life

To serve, to save him, *Bashi* would not spare,

If he foresaw to gain by his destruction

A pretty harlot, or a handsome horse.

These Persians, *Nizam*, shame our Tartars quite

In ev'ry mode of villainy, by Heav'n !

NIZAM.

We are not safe a moment. If the Shah

(As I'm afraid his fortunes do decline)

Meets a reverse, we Tartars are undone.

His bloody arts will not support him long.

ABDUL.

The Shah reposes greater faith in us,

Than in his fellow Persians. Them he hates.

Of both he's diffident——with ample reason——

Of both he's diffident !——His wary policy

Plays on our jealousies. By that we're held,

Poiz'd in suspense. Precarious situation !

On that, he knows, his very All depends.

NIZAM.

What miscreants are we ? Doom'd to ev'ry ill,

That human guilt derives on human head !

We feign to love, yet foster cordial hate.

We feign to wish, and aid each other's weal,

Yet tacitly enjoy each other's woe ;

Beneath concealment, seize each mean advantage ;

For gain or malice eagerly betray.

'Tis only fear, the dread of common danger,
 The bond of a fraternity of thieves,
 Holds us united. Execrable varlets !
 We plot and toil to curse ourselves ; for what ?
 Riches and glory dazzle folly's eye !
 Empty delusions ! Riches earn'd with guilt
 And kept with danger, as they are with us,
 Are no felicities. And what is glory ?——
 Ignobly won, or ignorantly bestow'd,
 Praise has no relish : poor is the fruition,
 Unless the conscious soul give self-applause.

ABDUL.

Plac'd in this world, we must pursue its ways.

NIZAM.

From what necessity ? Are vice and folly
 Not man's own free creation ? How much better
 Might we apply to meliorate its ways ?
 What mortal, calmly retrospecting life,
 To view the scenes of misery and shame,
 Produc'd from guilt, but at the shocking sight
 Recoils with horror ? Nature, were we wise,
 Emphatically teaches, peace and joy
 Can solely issue from one hallow'd spring,
 Unfeign'd Benevolence. Are we not mad,
 Reversing nature, trampling Heav'n's first law ?
 With us the grand predominant is Malice.
 Hence, flown is peace ; and always bent our minds
 Either to do, or to repel some wrong.
 Hence, joy is vanish'd ; all of that we know
 Is such as fiends may share ; is but a glance
 Of pride in mischief, which redoubles anguish.
 Such is the wisdom, such the works of Guilt !
 It grasps at pleasure, and embraces pain :
 It deeply damns itself.

ABDUL.

ABDUL.

I know, good *Nizam*,
Your generous temper, honest wisdom, well.
But abstract wisdom now is abject folly.
What would you plead of amity and truth
To growling savages and hissing vipers?
Those fair ideas never trac'd their minds.
We, thus embark'd upon the Persian bottom,
Must manage sharply, mated as we are,
To voyage safely.

NIZAM.

What do you advise?

ABDUL.

My mind suggests an hundred wild expedients,
Alike precarious. I am now impatient
For the result of *Amur's* charge from *Ali*.

NIZAM (*observing one approach.*)

The Christian patriarch. *Nadir* gives him leave,
With *Myrza*, *Georgia's* prince, to walk at large
And see their friends, within this wide inclosure.

ABDUL.

I'm glad 'tis he. Accost the worthy man.
He's sage and trusty : his mature advice
May be salubrious at this arduous juncture.

[*Exit Abdul.*]

Enter Patriarch.

NIZAM.

Well met, good Christian Father ! Health and peace !
In such misfortunes as have fallen on you,
I pity one so aged, good, and wise :

I do—

I do—with tenderness you scarce expect
 In a Mahometan's, a Tartar's bosom.
 Might worth avail, you merit better things.
 In this external meanness and distress,
 Obsequious reverence and esteem attend
 On your exalted virtues.

PATR.

Generous youth !
 I love a countenance where honor shines.—
 A country's manners and opinions must,
 As good or evil, influence the mind.
 This stands unquestion'd : yet I ne'er deem'd virtue
 A product circumscrib'd to clime or soil.
 We see the best religion, plant divine,
 Inserted on a stubborn wicked heart,
 Will either not take root, or grows corrupt;
 While native virtues, warm'd by Heav'n's indulgence,
 In the wild olive often sweetly flourish.

NIZAM.

The force of manners in the Persian state
 We may at once contemplate and deplore.
 For what but deep degeneracy of manners
 Brought down the plagues of tyranny and war ?
 Plagues far the most tremendous Heav'n lets fall
 On guilty mortals——View the dismal landscape !
 Must not the eye, that heretofore has seen
 These once luxuriant plains and blooming hills,
 O'erflow with piteous tears to see them now ?
 How rich the soil is, and how sweet the clime !
 The dame's indulgence made the children wanton.

PATR.

And then the Wantons stripp'd her. Ill return !
 Too incidental both in house and state !

NIZAM.

NIZAM.

Decay of public Love, the nation's bane,
 From idle pride and luxury began.
 The Great, propense to build a guilty grandeur,
 And riot in excesses, called pleasure,
 Fell, like the sinning cherubim, from glory,
 Involving all below them in their fall.
 Redundance of expence, wherein they vy'd,
 Soon made the mighty Lords of millions poor.
 Profusion match'd with Avarice (sister-fiends)
 Came hand in hand. He covets still another's,
 Who wastes his own. To satiate luxury,
 They changed patriotism for oppression :
 Sordidly sought the offices of state
 By venal means, for lucrative designs ;
 Devis'd all public and all private quirks,
 To dupe the sovereign, and to fleece the people.

PATR.

Believe me, Sir, that fordid Selfishness
 Is weakly fighted, is a froward child :
 It sees life's glittering toys, and tastes the sweets,
 That hang against its lips ; but knows no more,
 Nor ever thinks beyond the present moment.
 It disregards, opposes, or betrays
 The public welfare, which involves its own.
 It is a vulgar passion ; with the Vulgar
 May serve the public as a nobler motive ;
 But in the Great is baneful. Leading men,
 Already rich enough for wise fruition,
 Should know their interest is to be no richer :
 Nothing but virtue can exalt them more.
 When they presume to build their grandeur higher,
 They crush its basis : Soon or late they fall
 Amid the desolation themselves make,

At best a splendid ruin.
 When selfishness pervades imperial counsels,
 Public and future interests are rejected :
 The present people fall a prey to rapine ;
 Posterity, by ancestral crimes,
 Are doom'd to be expos'd, to shift or perish.

NIZAM.

So nations sink ! ————— Can any mode of Rule
 Avert such dissolution ?

PATR.

None establish'd.
 In ev'ry mode of Rule, it seems forgotten
 That property gives pow'r ; and laws are vain,
 Where pow'r annuls their force. The main expedient,
 True Policy persuades, is, *balance property* ;
 Proportion it so well, that none, too rich,
 May dare despise the laws ; that none, too poor,
 May faint beneath oppression. Rule so modell'd,
 As both to make and to maintain such poize,
 Would settle independence ; which, in fact,
 Is the rich root of industry and virtue.
 The good of states, as health of bodies lies
 In fit proportion of the various parts,
 In sympathy and harmony of action ;
 These can exist only where all enjoy
 Due share of property.

NIZAM.

That's right, good father !

PATR.

Whoe'er wou'd see his fair plantation flourish,
 Permits no cumbrous overhanging shade ;

But

But only such as fortifies from storms :
 He gives free passage to the sun and air ;
 And leaves each individual room to grow ;
 Manures the sickly, props the tender plant,
 Prunes the luxuriant, and with equal care
 Promotes in all an happy vegetation.
 Example this, not frivolous for rulers.

NIZAM.

By no means !

PATR.

Such is the task of Rule !
 Its right is founded solely in its use
 To guard pure equity and public good.
 It ought to obviate distress and vice,
 That none be wretched, none indulg'd in wrong ;
 But that mankind, by nature equal, may
 Have equal happiness. For this alone
 Distinctions ought to rise in rank or office.
 Authority is but the public centinel,
 Chosen by the people, guided by just laws,
 To guard all human rights from violation :
 If e'er it deviates from that sacred end,
 It forfeits fealty ; and its abuse,
 Under a profligate disguise of law,
 Degenerates into the worst of crimes.
 For, spite of speculation and refinement,
 Plain natural instinct ever will conceive,
 (Especially if felt experience teach)
 That tyranny's indeed the worst injustice
 Man can devise or act against his kind.

NIZAM.

God's heaviest curse upon a guilty land
 Is setting over it abandon'd rulers,

It seems, that in extreme of indignation
Heaven sent this Shah to scourge this wicked race.

PATR.

So bad a people no good prince could govern.
The Great and Vulgar are so quite abandon'd,
They love not, they despise the virtuous arts,
Which render nations happy.

NIZAM.

True——The Great
Despise those arts which constitute true greatness ;
Those arts sublime, which by a guardian sway
Make millions happier than they could themselves ;
Those arts, which constitute the real Worthy,
Right meritorious both of wealth and honor ;
Which form the truly gentle noble royal ;
Those they regard not. They affect cabal,
Corruption, peculation, base exaction,
And all the paltry tricks, which fools imagine
Will serve to perk up them in pomp and pleasure ;
And trample others in contempt and misery.
The Vulgar, ever prone to ill example,
Ape them in all their imitable attributes :
Changing their former industry and thrift,
(Which only made them drudges to oppressors)
Into luxurious sloth and dissipation,
They study pride, servility, and rapine,
'Till every social virtue is expir'd.
Bloodshed and ravage will infest the land,
While men remain to slay, and spoil to plunder.

PATR.

Just so (comparing greater things with small)
A realm of bees, when they degenerate,

Become

Become industrious to their own decay :
 Instead of bringing nectar joyous home,
 Maintaining order and repelling wrongs ;
 They waste the golden treasure in their cells ;
 Fraternal hatred points their angry stings :
 The hive's a foe, and plunder to itself,
 'Till mutual slaughter, want, and neighbouring hornets,
 Strong through their weakness, quite destroy the swarm.

NIZAM.

Yet God has crown'd these wicked men with glory.

PATR.

Success in war ? 'Tis glare instead of glory,
 The feats of war with haughty noise and shew
 Delude mankind : Are only crimes too big
 For mortal judge to speak their awful sentence :
That only Heav'n can utter with its thunder ;
 Only can execute with flames of hell.

NIZAM.

You make me tremble !

PATR.

The divinest glory
 Consists in virtue, active to diffuse
 All virtuous blessings ; as when great Jehovah
 Smiles on his works, and all burst into joy.

NIZAM.

You melt my inmost soul, divine old man !
 Unusual sweetness ravishes my heart.
 In your idea glory's bright and lovely.
 I wish to quit these horrid scenes of blood !
 A gloomier horror scowls upon my mind,
 In that I serve such execrable ends.

PATR.

PATR.

Where evil thrives there's much employ for good —
 In your condition virtue is not lost :
 What's more divine than counter-working ill ?
 Perhaps too often you may find its use
 To blunt the edge of barbarous designs.

NIZAM.

Indeed too often !——Father, I esteem
 Your worth and wisdom. Hear me—*Nadir's* state
 Seems to vacillate ; and in our dilemma
 We cannot leave him, but with certain loss :
 Lives are at stake of many gallant men :
 Neither can we securely wait his fall :
That would o'erwhelm us.

PATR.

Nizam, I perceive it.
 One lucid point, I think, portends the dawn
 Of his and our combin'd felicity.
 We number twenty thousand Georgian prisoners,
 Now in the camp : and thirty thousand others
 Lurk in the mountains and the wilds of *Georgia*,
 Completely disciplin'd, inur'd to war :
 These all are ready at their prince's call.
 Set *Myrza* free ; release the Georgian prisoners ;
 Demand no ransom, but a firm alliance,
 Sanction'd with sacred oaths and hostages ;
 Our aid will raise him yet, and once again
 Set *Nadir* on a rock.

NIZAM.

I think it would.——
 The Shah is haughty ; but necessity
 May win compliance from the stubborn savage.

I will

I will not pretermitt the first occasion
To make experiment.

[Exit Nizam.

PATR.

Alas, here comes

My good unhappy Prince. It wounds my heart
To see him thus: so mournful! And I thought
He seem'd to-day dejected more than common.

Enter Myrza, walking thoughtfully.

PATR.

To ask why hangs this sadness on my Prince
Were to suppose his great and gentle mind
Insensible as those of vulgar men.
'Tis dreadful to exchange a royal crown,
With all its grand appendages, for chains:
So great a downfall might distract a soul
Devoid of solid virtue for its base;
Might sink it still more abject than its state
Of captive meanness, indigence, and bonds:
But well I know, your country's deep distress,
In your esteem, preponderates your own.
Your kingdom's waste; your people are undone:
Their peace and wealth were your delight and care.
You bore the tempest firmly at the first:
In one so young your very foes admir'd
Such equanimity, such strength of soul.
Ah, now I see——Conceal from me you cannot——
Unusual sorrow clouds my Prince's brow.
Reluctant to disturb your solemn thoughts,
I held my peace, 'till my profound concern
Grows too importunate for longer silence.

MYRZA.

MYRZA.

You see enough to justify my grief;
You see not all: The worst remains unknown.

PATR.

Would I could know, and ease you of it too!
Perhaps the load of sorrow you sustain
Becomes oppressive, bearing it so long.
Spirits untam'd, the pulses beating high,
Will meet misfortune with a brave disdain;
Will mount awhile, and triumph in distress;
But days and weeks and months and years of woe
Bow down and break the heart.

MYRZA.

On some occasions
Indignity is like the scorpion's stroke;
It stings to madness: So intense the pang,
All deaths, all torments are as nothing to it!
I might endure indignities my own;
But this is more! Unutterably more!

PATR.

What mean you?

MYRZA.

Nadir adds to all my wrongs
One, so superlative, it cuts my soul;
No Stoic cou'd support it!—O *Circassia*!

PATR.

Ha! What about *Circassia*?

MYRZA.

To his tent

This

This low'ring ev'ning as a victim led
In all the pompous mockery of state——

(hesitating and agitated)

PATR.

What then ? Proceed.

MYRZA.

My heart !——My soul ! It burns !——
She now perhaps is offer'd to the Dæmon,
Like a poor helpless lamb. That lovely face,
Deform'd with terror, and suffus'd with tears !
That sweet voice hoarsen'd with distressful cries !
That gentle form disorder'd, trembling, sinking ;
On weaken'd knees imploring *Nadir's* pity !
That bosom rent with anguish !——While the monster
Relentless views her with a savage smile,
Pleas'd with his tender agonizing prey ;
Relentless views that brightest work of Heav'n,
And meditates its ruin !——Righteous Deity !
Sleeps thy omniscience ? Or canst Thou behold
That guilty scene, and not arise in wrath
To shake the world's foundation ? If had I
Thy boundless pow'r one moment, I would tear
That wretch, as whirlwinds rend the woods ; and scatter
His frame in atoms, like the sand that's swept
Off *Amo's* scorching plain.

PATR.

Alas, my Prince !
Have I not known you from the hour of birth ?
In prattling infancy I fondly taught
Articulation to your lisping tongue !
I train'd you daily with paternal care,
To Virtue, Science, and a princely Manhood.

Thro'

Thro' ev'ry scene your various griefs and joys
 I shar'd as mine: Your inmost soul I knew,
 Familiar as my own.—Ah! never thus,
 No; never thus I found you! Always mild,
 In pleasure sober, and in suffering calm.
 You are a proof, that *some* unhappy cause
 Swells ev'ry bosom into wild emotions.

MYRZA.

Sir, calmness were a crime.

PATR.

Nay, think not so.—
 Suppose it, yet how vain is indignation?—
 Where's prudence vanish'd?—What impetuous torrent
 Thus overturns it? Why does this one female,
 While hundreds equal to her suffer worse,
 So much alarm you? I ne'er knew your passion
 Of love. (It must be love.)

MYRZA.

Nor knows it she.
 I met her in distress. O baneful hour!
 Sure she was sent to aggravate affliction!
 Dear fatal hour!—I saw—I heard—I lov'd!
 Since *Persia's* tyrant vanquish'd *Georgia's* arms
 And led us captive from our native seat,
 I could not wound a lady's ear with love:
 Prudence and virtue both forbad my flame.
 Often we met, we walk'd, and we convers'd—
 Mourning our woes—And then her lovely mind
 Threw off reserve. Her soft distressful tales
 Infected me at once with grief and love.
 O, Sir, to-night she's sacrific'd to *Nadir*!

PATR.

PATR.

By their religion, conquest, right or wrong,
 Imparts indulgence to profane desires.
 This proves how error entertain'd for truth
 Abuses and debases human nature,
 But lessens *Nadir's* crime. True, I resent ;
 My bosom bleeds for her and hundreds more
 Alike distress'd. What then ? We cannot aid.
 Our balm is patience. Calmly brave despair.
 Forgive me, if I say, another flame
 May put out this.

MYRZA.

No, never while I live !
 Sir, did you know this mistress of my heart,
 You would approve my flame, and fan with praise.
 Others have wit and beauty in excess,
 To ravish admiration and desire ;
 But some diminishing forbidding folly
 Soon damps the rapture, quenches out esteem,
 The incense that should keep love's altar burning.
 Not so with her !——Such sense and goodness guide
 And ornament her manners, so unite
 Mildness and dignity, by heav'n she seems
 Some soft Divinity in human image
 Sweetly inspiring sacred awe and love.
 The gentle arts (for elegance and use)
 Thro' some peculiar gracefulness in her,
 Seem happy nature—easy as refin'd.
 None but the most abandon'd heart could stray,
 To forfeit such a paradise of charms.
 The love of her includes the love of all,
 Heav'n formed lovely,——beauty, wit and merit.
 My passion's reason ; and my heart for ever
 Must rest on her, whom still it must approve.

PATR.

PATR.

Sir, yours is the discretion of a lover.
 In any instance, where your mind was free,
 I durst prefer your judgment to a thousand :
 Here I demur. 'Tis fabled, Love is blind :
 Rather, perhaps, he has a magic sight,
 That conjures up imaginary charms,
 Seen by the medium of no other eye.
 All lovers deem their captivating object
 The very quintessence of human excellence.
 Admit the valu'd lady very high,
 Has the fair paragon no equals ?

MYRZA.

None !
 Reas'ning is vain !—O Justice ! Cou'd I reach
 That tyrant's heart !

PATR.

Your wish is vain and wild :
 Reason dissuades, Religion's voice forbids.
 Death merits he, yet thousands more do not,
 Who must with him be overwhelm'd. Reflect on that.
 The wreck of numbers must be the result.
 How many *Nadirs* in this guilty land
 Would rise at once, contending for the throne ?
 Tyranny's better than such wild confusion.
 Obligated by our truly sacred creed
 To seek the good of all the human race,
 Only for good should we afflict our foes.
 Besides, does *Nadir* mean to injure *Myrza* ?
 He knows not your attachment.

MYRZA.

No, thank Heaven !
 That thought would elevate the villain's joy.

Tell

Tell me how, possibly, can worse ensue
 From *Nadir's* death? His life must be the spring
 Of all the miseries man can bring on man:
 No change can be for worse. In *Persia's* empire
 There's ne'er a cot, that has not mourn'd the loss
 Of son or father, fallen thro' *Nadir's* crimes.
 Have kings, set up to guard the rights of men,
 Prerogative to do the greatest wrongs?
 You ne'er taught me that doctrine.

PATR.

Ah, my Prince!
 Why so precipitate? You are not sure
 To find your love return'd. You own this maid's
 Unconscious of your passion.

MYRZA.

Were she not,
 Her indignation would upbraid the coward,
 The luke-warm lover, who could know her injur'd,
 And not rush in to smite the monster dead
 Amid his guilty cruel exultations.

PATR.

Forbid, you so resolve!

MYRZA.

I will, or perish.

PATR.

You rush on death.

MYRZA.

Suppose I do, what's death?
 Our nature's debt. We mortals all must die.

C

I scorn

I scorn a wish to lengthen out my span
With guilt and infamy.

PATR.

You make me weep.
In any cause, which conscience justify'd,
I wou'd die *for* you!—*With* you I must die!

MYRZA (*embracing him*)

You good old man! Friend! Father! half-ador'd!
Your grief subdues me.—Never can I quit
The stedfast resolution of my soul.
Forgive my firmness. More than human ardor
I think inspires me. Firm I am and fix'd!

PATR.

O dearest *Myrza*! blind and rash is youth!
Fain would I sway you to maturer counsels.
Let us retire. Here come the Persian Generals.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter BASHI and SALEH.

SALEH.

Bashi, observe those two, who walk that way.

BASHI.

The Christian patriarch and the Georgian prince.
I overheard a part of their discourse:
Young *Myrza* was outrageous.

SALEH.

By your smile
I guess, the subject pleas'd you.

BASHI.

BASHI.

You are right.

This Christian prince is ftung to very madnefs
At *Nadir's* new amour. You know *Circaffia*?

SALEH.

I faw her brought this evening to the tent.

BASHI.

She's *Myrza's* paramour. He vows revenge.

SALEH.

Aye, fo do we, but vows have no avail.

BASHI.

Never despond. Perhaps this fiery prince
May enterprize fome good : he fears not death,
Nor values life, without this pretty damfel.
Since firft we aim'd the tyrant's ruin, nothing
Has ris'n fo opportunely.

SALEH.

How, good *Bafhi*?

What pow'r has he unaided ? And who dares
Partake with him in plots ? He muft, as traitors,
Detest his accessaries.

BASHI.

He alone

Will tempt the tyrant's life ; and if he fail,
We are but as before ; as fafe from danger
As diftant from fufpicion. We lie ftill :
Grant him access ; he will defire no more.
While warm, and poffibly not void of hope
To fave his miftrefs chafte, he'll beat the rounds :
This night, he probably, will try for entrance.

Pass him unnotic'd to the Tyrant's tent.
 Where you command, his way lies most commodious ;
 Easy as he cou'd wish. Some secret friend
 May whisper that the guards are drunk, remiss :
 This will direct him to explore your quarter.

SALEH.

By heav'n this project brightens : I half see,
 This night henceforward will be memorable,
 And kept a feast among the sons of *Persia* :
 Grateful posterity, to latest times,
 Will teach their children to record the hour,
 That sees the mighty bloody *Nadir* fall.

[*Exeunt.*]

END OF ACT I.

A C T II.

SCENE, NADIR'S TENT.

Enter BASHI and SALEH.

SALEH.

THIS Tyrant cites a council ! mock parade !
 To such a monster who can be a friend ?
 Why ask advice, which none dares fairly give ;
 Which fairly given, he would reject with scorn ?
 Perhaps wou'd punish honesty with death,
 If vouching sentiments oblique to his.

BASHI.

Remember *Isfahan*, the latest scene
 Of royal robbery, imperial murder.
 Unjust exactions levy'd there by arms,
 In wanton cruelty what thousands fell,
 Who cou'd not find a ransom for their lives ?
 Not only subjects ; Indians and Armenians,
 In violation of the rights and laws
 Of nations, hospitality and heav'n,
 He spoil'd, imprison'd, tortur'd, burn'd alive.
 He grows in cruelty, is drunk with blood,
 Insane with horrid frequency of slaughter.

SALEH.

This arrogant intrepid act of *Ali*,
 Open revolt, which puts him on the peril
 Of trying desperately for death or victory—

I say this act must instigate both us
To favour *Ali's* cause with more than wishes—
With all the weight of aid.

BASHI.

Consider, *Saleh*.

'Tis politic to know our own importance.
We have the choice to cast the sinking weight
In either scale, in *Nadir's* or in *Ali's* ;
To give the king or nephew, as we list,
A coffin or a crown. If we adhere
To *Nadir* and his Tartars, we can keep
Him steady on the throne : If we revolt
To join with *Ali*, then the tyrant must
Deserted fall.

SALEH.

I echo, let him fall !
And *Persia's* widest bounds re-echo, *fall* !

BASHI.

Saleh, perhaps in this decisive juncture,
Nadir may learn to prize us as his friends ;
If so, with him is best access to fortune.

SALEH.

Bashi, art thou a stranger to the Shah ?
Can old experienc'd *Bashi* counsel thus ?
By fortune's glitter thou art dazzled blind.
Didst thou e'er know that *Nadir* priz'd a friend,
But as a hind, the ox that plows his land ?
He values him for work, but keeps him lean ;
If e'er he fats him, it is sure for slaughter.

BASHI.

I know that, *Saleh*. But I say necessity—

And

And mark—he has the pow'r and the possession
Ali wants both.

SALEH.

But want he shall not long.
 Both we will give him ; part shall be our own.
 How like you that ?

BASHI.

I yield to your opinion.
 Let adulation's soothing filken tongue
 Blandish the tyrant. This unseen disaster,
 The great defection of his fav'rite nephew,
 Will sting his soul to fury. Much it boots
 Our art and vigilance to mind which way
 The wrathful tempest drives : for to oppose
 Wou'd be to brave the flaming thunderbolt,
 And perish in the twinkling of an eye.

SALEH.

You know how shrewdly he affects contempt
 For *Ali*'s military skill : You know
 He often ridicules his tardy parts.
 Envy delights to see obscur'd that merit
 Which dims one's own : Is merit very radiant,
 Gladly wou'd see the glory quite extinguish'd ;
 Tho', such a noble luminary lost,
 The world might reel in everlasting darkness.
 Depreciate *Ali* ; paint with what dismay
 That haughty boy must humble at his frown :
 Indulge his temper in the savage thought
 Of *Ali*'s torments and expiring groans.

BASHI.

That's wisdom, *Saleh*. Surest is the way,
 And safest, to subvert the man we hate,

To seem his friends, his very zealous friends;
 Either delude him in pernicious schemes
 To be his own destroyer ; or embrace
 Some lucky hour, when busy danger sleeps,
 And smite him to the silent dust ourselves.
 I hope young *Myrza's* jealousy keeps hot ;
 And will not cool without one bold attempt.
 Success attend him !

SALEH.

Silence !——Room for Tartars.

Enter ABDUL and NIZAM.

ABDUL.

Ye Persian Leaders, pillars of the state !
 Often in council have we met to plan
 'The operations of a fierce campaign,
 Revolving the catastrophe of hosts,
 The wreck of cities and the waste of realms ;
 Oft have we join'd in the ensanguin'd field,
 And firmly fac'd the enginry of war,
 'To crown with arduous deeds our great resolves :
 But ne'er did we convene upon a business
 Of deeper gravity, than this before us ;
 Never with diffidence of our success ;
 Nor under terror from a pow'rful rebel.

SALEH.

Who owns a thought of diffidence or terror ?
 Is this thy language to the martial Shah ?
 What ! Wou'dst thou sicken with a coward's tongue
 The hearts of *Persians* ; and unnerve their hands ?
 Thou canst not do it, *Abdul* !

ABDUL.

ABDUL.

Neither wou'd I !
What arrogancy——

NIZAM.

Cease !——The Sovereign enters.

Enter NADIR,

NADIR.

Which of you here conspires against my throne ?
What !——One or all ?——Have you agreed for spoil ?
Which of my provinces are you to govern ?
Ungrateful miscreants ! Can your sovereign trust
So vile a vermin, who, for sake of change,
Would leap into the fiery jaws of hell ?
Audacious boy ! That weak ungrateful varlet,
Perfidious slave ! Thinks he to seize my throne,
The just reward of my long glorious toil ?
Villains ! dare you uphold him in that hope ?

BASHI.

Exalted Sovereign ! Most renowned Prince !
We die of grief, if you suspect our faith.
It is the joy of us your duteous slaves
To kiss the dust of your all-sacred feet.
Most glorious Monarch, jewel of the world !
Command our services ; with utmost pow'r,
Our loyal hearts devotedly obey you.

SALEH.

Most happy King ! in whose auspicious reign
The Persian glory, with refulgent head,
Rises majestic among the stars,
And stands rever'd of all the nations round ;
If your mild sovereign mercy will permit

The fatal order to uncloſe your lips,
The rebel prince will periſh.——So may all
Our Sov'reign's enemies !

ABDUL.

Moſt mighty King !
Since you have choſen the Tartars for your ſlaves,
And graciously adorn'd us with the honor
To walk behind, and humbly bear the ſkirts
Of your imperial fortunes ; we are ready,
At your command, to march thro' rocky wilds,
To combat hunger, thirſt, and ſcorching heat,
Boldly to brave the horrid front of war ;
So we may crush your foes, and ever find
Your high benevolence to us continu'd.

NIZAM.

Permit us, Sire, to dwell in your eſteem :
Our loyalty is firm.

NADIR.

And ſo it ought.——
Regard your duty, as you tender life.——
Amur, as envoy from that rebel, *Ali*,
Deigns his attendance. (Enter *Amur*.
Thou creature of a traitor ! What's thy errand ?

AMUR.

Mirror of juſtice ! Who the throne adorn
Of mighty *Xerxes* ! The unhappy prince,
Your nephew, *Ali*, ſends your meanest ſlave
To lay before your Maſteſty his ſuit.
He trembles to approach your royal preſence,
To kiſs the duſt of your exalted feet,
If you reject his humble ſupplication.

NADIR.

NADIR.

Unhappy prince!—I say, perfidious traitor!
 Who made him so unhappy? His weak self;
 His own rebellious and ungrateful heart.
 Tell me! What boon wou'd his presumption ask?

AMUR.

His highness, weighing what becomes the dignity
 Of heir apparent to the throne of *Persia*,
 Most humbly supplicates your royal bounty
 To be invested with the provinces,
Herât and Khorasan.

NADIR.

The modest youth!
 He thinks if I shou'd weakly give him that,
 He then cou'd take the rest; nor need he stoop
 To ask again. Why did he bribe my troops?
 And why revolt, before this suit preferr'd?
 Is this his civil way of intimating,
 It is high time that I were earth'd, and he
 Plac'd on my throne.

AMUR.

Forgive me, glorious King!
 The prince is all submission; but he dreads
 Your high displeasure, if you slight his suit.
 His uncle reconcil'd, he'll lay down arms.

NADIR.

Go then, assure him of my fix'd intent
 To raise him high beyond his proudest hope:
 I will distinguish the aspiring youth.
 By heav'n, I'll build a pyramid as high
 As those at *Cairo* on the banks of *Nile*,

With

With heads of traitors; his shall grace the summit.
 I hope this boon will please him to my wish.
Saleh, drive out this traitor: beat him well!
 Leave him just life, to crawl and carry tidings
 To his detested master. [Ex. *Saleh with Amur*,
Bashi, speak:
 Does this reply become the Persian king
 To send that villain?

BASHI.

Sire, your royal wisdom
 Dictates most justly. Truth and Pow'r to you,
 Who rule the world, have lent their choicest gifts.
 I grieve, I blush to utter disrespect
 Of treacherous *Ali*: Sure, he shames his blood!
 A froward heart without a warrior's head,
 Without one virtue to esteem or love:
 Aspiring without parts, he ne'er cou'd shine,
 But by the lustre he derives from you.

NADIR.

Abdul, thou listen'st pensively.—Thy voice?

ABDUL

O mighty King, though he deserves reproach;
 That is no weapon to defend the state:
 My suffrage standeth for effectual war.
 He and his numbers rise above contempt:
Ali may prove a conquest worthy *Nadir*.

NADIR.

Thou dost not fear him.—Dost thou?

ABDUL.

Mighty King,
 There's danger in delay.

NIZAM.

NIZAM.

With deign'd permission,
Ali has strength and counsel for a war.
 Among this giddy people, fond of change,
 Numbers assemble daily to his standard.
 Indulgent nature lent him many graces,
 Which, if but specious, win the world's applause :
 He's open, affable, of good address,
 And popularly voluble of tongue :
 His generosity is not conceal'd ;
 Nor his repute for gallantry in arms.
 Much do these splendid qualities outvy
 More solid sense, in candidates for power.
 He waxes every moment : best at first
 His party may be vanquish'd.

NADIR.

Curse the traitor !
 Thy panegyrics wanton in his praise !
 He is a senseless as perfidious traitor !

BASHI.

Aye ! weak and despicable ! Never mind him !
 When once this blaze of innovating heat
 Cools in the populace, he'll be deserted :
 His power will perish sudden as it rose,
 Like fungi springing in an autumn morn,
 Ere mid-day sun, corruption, dust and worms.
 To set upon them in their frantic tumult,
 Ere they reflect on their temerity,
 Wou'd make them rebels in their own defence.

NADIR.

Bashi, the brutish beings, who possess
 No more of loyalty, nor of religion,

Than

Than to run after every patriot-meteor,
 Exhal'd in the foul vapour of the times,
 Deserve to perish. Subjects ought to know,
 By sense habitual, their awful duty ;
 Shou'd tremble at the right divine in kings.
 Knew I a slave, that mov'd his tongue or finger
 Against the sacredness of royal majesty——
 Nay, cou'd I ken the heart, and spy a wish,
 Tho' small as the least globule of its blood,
 That look'd rebellious ; by the saints I swear,
 Death instantaneous shou'd be his portion.
 Can *Bashi* think that *Nadir* will not punish ?

BASHI.

Mighty and glorious monarch, is not war
 Of all the ills that burthen earth, most horrid ?
 Thousands with cool deliberate purpose meet,
 Each to inflict on each the pains of death,
 Extinguish life, and see no more the sun.
 'This, ev'n 'twixt nations, the remotest strangers,
 Or adverse most for interest and glory,
 Is horrid, very horrid ! But among
 Our fellow-citizens, companions, kindred,
 'Tis doubly horrid : There it often happens
 Brother with brother strives for life and death ;
 Father with son, encountring in the fray,
 Plunge in each other the decisive steel.
 Avert, O gracious Prince ! the sad occasion !
 If you resolve to put them to the sword,
 Employ the Tartars in their execution :
 Our Persian troops might shrink from such a task ;
 And leave the royal purpose disappointed.
 Excuse us then. Us it will best become
 Here to attend your highness in the camp,
 And guard your sacred person.

NADIR.

NADIR.

Honest *Bashi* !

Thou speakest like a Persian. I'm resolv'd
The Tartars shall reduce the rebel arms.
Go thou, and see the watch observe their duty.

(*Exit Bashi.*)

Tartars, I'm not so blind a dupe, but that
I ken black treason in that Persian's heart :
He veers for *Ali*. Curse the hoary knave !
This hour shou'd end him, did I not to-night
Intend a nobler, more prodigious vengeance.
Tartars ! these hellish Persians must not live.
I know they hate me—just as I hate them,
Most bitterly !——I wish the odious race
Had but a single head ; then trusty this

(*drawing and brandishing his sabre*)

Shou'd lop it at a blow.——But you, brave Tartars,
I love for downright honesty. Be firm !

This night—(for danger hangs upon delay)
Must be distinguish'd by a signal deed.

I easily foresee our fate approaching,
Which only desperate measures can prevent.

My nephew, *Ali*, or myself must fall,
Unless retreat can be secur'd in *Kælat*.

That fort I made impregnable, to serve
For solid refuge in a day of tempest.

Fruitless precaution ! When surrounded thus
By fiends, who meditate our swift destruction,
Unless we seize this juncture, and destroy

The Persian serpents. Therefore, faithful Tartars !
Hear my resolve : With speed command your troops
To massacre the Persians in their tents.

Shrink not, my friends, at such an harsh command :
Self-preservation is a weighty plea !

Immense reward shall crown fidelity ;

To recompense the task, the *Indian spoil*
 Is lodg'd in *Kælat*: Your's it shall be all.
 Order your gallant troops to whet their sabres,
 And edge them sharp, that not a single stroke
 May light in vain. Momentous is the duty:
 On your good faith and conduct I rely.
 You know, your safety is involv'd in mine.

ABDUL.

Your slaves are all obedience !

NIZAM.

Mighty Shah !
 Your humble slave—May I presume——To-night,
 Conferring with the patriarch-priest of *Georgia*,
 He spoke of seventy thousand Georgian soldiers,
 Ready at *Myrza's* and your Highness' call
 To serve your Highness. An unransom'd liberty
 For *Myrza* and the other Georgian prisoners
 Is what he asks.——He offers hostages.

NADIR.

Slave, is the world's dread sovereign sunk so low,
 That he must hire an abject captive's aid ?
 Check thy presumption ! Mention it no more !

(Exit Nadir.)

ABDUL.

O *Nizam*, *Nadir* rushes on his fate !
 Your mention made me glad His proud rejection
 Stuns me to death. We must, at all events,
 Support his cause ; the Tartars else must perish.
 This constitutes ten thousand obligations.
 Nor only duty dictates to obey ;

Necessity

Necessity permits no other choice.
The task is not so hard as it is horrid.

NIZAM.

Horrid indeed ! My soul appal'd recoils ;
My whole frame sickens at the shocking thought
Of shedding basely so much human blood.

ABDUL.

If we refuse, we must resolve to die :
At least, to lose our honors and our fortunes ;
And wander exiles, indigent, forlorn,
Pursu'd by his eternal indignation.

NIZAM.

His indignation ! That, in such a case,
I count more eligible than his favor.
Shall wealth and honor make us mean and poor ?
Rather let us deserve them than enjoy :
Then real wealth and honor shall be ours,
Which man can neither give nor take away.

ABDUL.

Nizam, art thou possess'd ? Escape is barr'd.
Of life and death the avenue's before us :
The short and sad alternative is this,
Whether on such conditions shall we choose
To live or die ?

NIZAM.

My choice shall be to die.
As many deaths as in the Persian host
Are swords and men, wou'd I resolve to die,
Rather than stain my soul by such a plunge
In guiltiness of blood.

ABDUL.

ABDUL.

Go, hang thee then !
 I am not tir'd of life !——Though I am old :
 I'll keep it and enjoy it while I may :
 It is my all. I cannot welcome death ;
 I'm no such Puritan. No flow'ry meads,
 No spicy groves, nor fountains of delight,
 With black-ey'd virgins under shady palm——
 No !——Nothing of a future world for me !
 Death is no friend of mine : Come when he will,
 I expect from him no event, but woe.

NIZAM.

Sad expectation ! Soften and repent.

ABDUL.

I've serv'd the Shah too faithfully, too long,
 In harden'd cruelty, repentance now
 Were only pusillanimous, and vain.
 Fiends ! what imports to me what sins I do ?
 I know, damnation is my future doom.

NIZAM.

Abdul, art thou so mad ? My soul's amaz'd !
 I tremble to have found a man so wicked !
 My friend that man ! O *Abdul*, canst thou thus
 To please a tyrant, for a paltry post,
 Shake hands with hell ? Canst thou, so unrelenting,
 Premeditate thy everlasting ruin ?

ABDUL.

Dost thou insult me ? Preacher, need I thee
 To dart compunction thro' my galled soul !
 I know thee, thou'lt betray the royal counsels !
 I must dispatch thee !

(Stabs him.)

NIZAM.

NIZAM.

Abdul! Abdul! Oh!—

Just heav'n!—Is this the wages of my love?
Have I e'er wrong'd thee?

ABDUL.

No! Thy crime is goodness.
Thou'rt too upright for this infernal world:
I give thee passport to a better, *Nizam*,
Which suits thee better. Sure that's ample kindness!

NIZAM.

O miserable mortal! Second *Nadir*!
Jest! Canst thou jest upon thy murder'd friend?
Adieu! I'm happier in these dying pangs,
Than thou in health and honor. Wretched friend!
(holding out his hand)
My soul forgives thee. *(Dies.)*

ABDUL.

Curse this bloody hand!
And curse this hellish heart! This best of men!
My friend!—he was—but now—Reproacher, peace!
(smiting his breast)
Hard, hard as brass!—be hard!—There's more to do.
Self-preservation is a weighty plea.

Enter NADIR.

NADIR.

I heard a groan. How's this?

ABDUL.

Adored Sovereign!
He spurn'd at your command; I greatly fear'd

He

He wou'd betray your highness : So my loyalty
O'ercame my friendship :—Oh!—'Tis sad!—I slew
him !

NADIR.

My faithful subject, and my valu'd friend,
Immense reward shall crown thy steady zeal.
Eunuchs, convey this traitor's body forth ;
And, on your safety, not a breath transpire !

(Eunuchs bear out the body.)

Abdul! dear *Abdul!* This was nobly done !
'Twas zealous for my service. But, O *Abdul!*
This man was great and good ; he was the darling,
He was the golden idol of the Tartars :
If it shou'd get divulg'd, that thus he dy'd,
His death will murder us : We must disguise it.
Now hasten to thy troops ; inflame their spirits
With hatred for the Persians : Add the fuel
Of the vast Indian spoil.

ABDUL.

Your faithful slave !

[Exit Abdul.]

NADIR, *solus.*

Ill-omen'd ! damn'd ! — Can tongue describe this hell,
This heart's extreme anxieties and horrors ?
It is a rueful and tremendous work !
It must be done. The fury is on wing,
And halts to stoop upon the Persian camp,
Like a fell vulture on a nest of young.
Persia shall be a charnel, ere I truckle :
In spite of destiny shall *Nadir* triumph.
A world for ought to quell these cares ; and lay
These perturbations ;——There's *Circassia* !—But
In woes and tears.—I must not see her now.

[Exit Nadir.]

Enter

Enter CIRCASSIA, weeping, and ZARA, Lady of the
Harram.

ZARA.

Why weep you so? You'll break your tender heart,
I wish she wou'd. *(Aside.)*

CIRCASSIA.

Can I refrain to weep?
A captive woman, and a victim doom'd
To tyrant lewdness.

ZARA.

Dwell not on the thought!

CIRCASSIA, *(looking on the floor)*

O what is this? It must be human blood!
I cannot set a foot upon the ground
For human blood!——O what a hideous place!
Methinks I'm got into a lion's den.
Nay, it is worse! In that, my bitter sorrows
Wou'd quickly end.

ZARA.

So will they here, *Circassia!*
They'll end in pleasure. You'll be much admir'd.

CIRCASSIA.

O never mention pleasure! Grief still new
Must prey on me, till I relinquish breath.

ZARA.

And am I charg'd unkindly?——Oh my heart! *(aside)*
Here I attend to welcome you, fair guest;
But you refuse consolement. Sit you down;
Compose your spirits.——Fearful fancy paints
Such dismal scenes as ne'er existed real.

Prepare

Prepare yourself to meet the gentle Shah:
You must be happy in his sovereign love.

CIRCASSIA.

Love! call it love! O Lady, say not love!
My heart's indignant, frightened, vex'd with shame!

ZARA.

Your sorrow raves. Why will you fret in vain?
From your fair hand you dash the cup of joy.
Take courage and indulge a lively heart;
Fantastic delicacy dies away.

CIRCASSIA.

Have you the softness proper to your sex?
Torment me not with what I can't endure.

ZARA.

I mean you kindly. *(Enter Eunuch listening.)*

CIRCASSIA.

Too officious kindness!
You teize me to distraction.—Life like mine,
That courts extinction, needs but little more.
Permit me to enjoy ('tis all I ask)
My grief in silence.

(CIRCASSIA sits in a mournful posture. ZARA walks at a distance, in agitation.)

ZARA.

May thy grief be fatal!
May'st thou enjoy the silence of the grave!
O she's too beautiful! I am undone!

EUNUCH *(aside)*

The plague of jealousy!

ZARA.

ZARA.

My Lord no more
Will look on me with eyes of ardent love;
Though much he lov'd me once; and I was blest
Unspeakably. An empress was I then
In state sublime. Adieu, all joys adieu!
I must descend among plebeian dames,
Who spitefully will add reproach to scorn,
Maliciously rejoicing at my fall.
O sad reverse! Disgrace! Despair!—What wounds
The soul like This,—deserted, slighted love?

EUNUCH (*aside.*)

O Nothing, nothing!—My good lady!—Speak
I will, I must.

ZARA.

O Eunuch, cou'd I blast
Yon blooming beauty! Cou'd a baleful wish
Turn all her features in the royal eye
Deform'd as apes, I shou'd be happy.

EUNUCH.

Madam!
Her features will to yours present a foil.
She has indeed the new-blown gloss of youth;
But looks as if she kiss'd the God of wine.
No merit, madam, in a curious eye.
What low'ring dulness!—Not a spark of soul!
Ungraceful neck!—A beauty!

ZARA.

O my stars!
I hate to look upon her! Odious creature!
Curs'd be the eye, that sees a charm about her! (*pauses.*
Yet

Yet I may keep her company and weep.
 O what indignity! the Shah's neglect!
 To see those tender looks, and joyful smiles
 Lavish'd on her, which us'd to flow on me.—
 To see him fondly whisper, press her hand,
 And pour out all the rapture of his soul,—
 While I, in anguish, sit unheeded by—
 Ye faints! I cannot bear it.

EUNUCH.

Hush! be calm!
 Reflect, my Lady, she must humble too,
 When some fresh wanton strikes our Sovereign's fight.
 His heart's too free for constancy: it roves
 Like a gay butterfly from flow'r to flow'r.

ZARA.

Yes! I foresee her downfall in my own.

EUNUCH.

Then comfort, Madam.

ZARA.

Eunuch, that reflection
 Subdues my envy. Why shou'd her misfortune
 Erect my joy? Will her disgrace restore
 My Sovereign's love to me? Ah no! some other,
 Perhaps less worthy, may succeed to both;
 Not I!——Unhappy woman! she has done
 Zara no wrong. Her great misfortune brings her
 To Nadir's arms.

EUNUCH (*aside.*)

Poor fluctuating heart!

ZARA.

ZARA.

I'm wrong!——My heart relents—I ask her pardon.
 I will befriend her. I regard her now,
 As one like me, indulg'd to taste the cup
 Of blifs imperial, just to quicken sense
 To future woe.—Good Eunuch, do retire. [*Exit Eun.*
 (*To Circassia.*)

Circassia, grieve not to the verge of death,
 If that too potent light'ning of your eye
 Has yet left Me one corner in that breast,
 Where late I reign'd sole emprefs, I will plead,
 Most earnestly will plead, as for my life,
 To gain you quick dismissal. I am tortur'd:
 My griefs are vast as yours.

CIRCASSIA, (*rising.*)

O dearest woman!
 Guardian of the distress'd! may the Almighty
 Prosper your dearest wishes! may your pow'r
 With *Persia's* mighty monarch still be more,
 Than ever woman boasted over man!
 My eyes, said you? I'd rather pluck them out,
 Than rob you, *Zara*, of your Sovereign's heart,
 More needful to your comfort than your own.

ZARA.

Be steel'd against him: slight his flatt'ring tongue;
 Scorn the enchantments of imperial glory;
 Be proud and petulant. You must not weep,
 Tremble and languish with a soft demeanor:
 You then will touch him and attach him more.
 Trust me, compassion from a man for woman
 Is dangerous sympathy; 'tis near to love.

CIRCASSIA.

Said opportunely——The unloveliest looks,
 D

The

The harshest tone will I assume before him ;
 Will study to excite disgust and hate.
 Angels, support me in the trying hour,
 Lest aching grief oppresses my burden'd heart ;
 And weak confusion make me softly tame !

ZARA.

Call into mind his cruelties in war,
 Your nation's hatred, your religion's zeal.
 Need you be taught to marshal in review
 Your own fresh-felt exasperating wrongs ?
 Though I do love him, dearly love him ; still
 I can be glad that you see all his faults ;
 And hate him for them.

CIRCASSIA.

Slow I cannot be
 To what you bid : I cannot need instruction,
 Nor arguments forget, to make him tremble.
 I wish he hated me as I do him !

ZARA.

O that he loved me as I do him !
 If I may be permitted, I will plead,
 With all the genuine eloquence of love,
 Your cause, *Circassia* ; and in yours my own.
 Our prophet err'd from nature when he taught
 Plurality of wives : The sacred purpose
 Of nuptial union, and the heart's affections
 Require no more, allow no more than one.
 Only in such a case as yours and mine
 Can one admirer make two ladies happy.

END OF ACT II.

A C T III.

SCENE, THE PERSIAN CAMP.

Enter Bashi and Saleh.

BASHI.

SALEH, have you perform'd the Shah's command?

SALEH.

Dismissed *Amur*, *Bashi*!—Yes! he's gone,
 Fraught with the presage, *Bashi*, as are we,
 Of a more joyful meeting.

BASHI.

Heaven confirm it!

SALEH.

To-morrow, ere the conscious Sun awake,
 To blush, as well he may, at human deeds,
 Five thousand veteran troops, detach'd from *Ali*,
 Encamp'd to-night behind the neighbouring mountains,
 Will march to succour us. The prudent nephew
 Rightly presum'd on our concurrence certain,
 Provided he sent force to face the Tartars
 Who here outnumber us. He speaks assuredly;
 He offers largely; all the spoil in *Kælat*.

BASHI.

Well then, let us be prompt in our compliance;
 And by our zeal in sacrificing prove
 Our warm devotion to the rising Sun.

SALEH.

With heart and spirit, *Bashi*. But there's hope—
 O chearing hope of a desir'd event
 From the incensed jealousy of *Myrza*.
 If he succeeds (as possibly he may)
 What dreadful carnage will be then prevented?

BASHI.

Doubtless, my friend!—Has *Myrza* been exploring?
 Can he get entrance to the Tyrant's tent?

SALEH.

I do not know—I left express command
 To let him pass unquestion'd, if he came.
 The Tartars are most busy in their tents,
 Whetting their fabres: What portent is this?

BASHI.

Good fortune, *Saleh*—pregnant to our wishes!
 The pure production of my lucky counsel!
 An expedition is the grand result.
 They trust to beat that stripling by themselves.
 Curse on them! how their weakness makes me laugh!
Nadir seems often mad in his attempts.
 I left them wisely planning operations,
 Which I foresee must end in their destruction.
 The shagg'd Barbarians are to conquer *Ali*.

SALEH.

That was a noble stretch of policy!
 One subtile head is worth an hundred hands.

BASHI.

My inmost soul exults in such a wile.
 'Tis mischief worthy of a politician.

SALEH.

SALEH.

Why, in this world, which is by custom grown
 A field of war, open or secret war,
 Whate'er great nature meant the end of man,
 Fraud may be deem'd a virtue: next to courage
 It is the chief; is countenanc'd as such.
 Deceit is practis'd by the prince and peasant:
 Each plies the mystery to his power and skill:
 The prosperous triumph with the world's applause:
 Success spreads honor over every stain.
 In this, as other arts, the most successful
 Are honor'd, and esteem'd the brightest men.
 'Tis your retailing pedling rogues that perish,
 For want of sense to carry on the trade.

BASHI.

Saleh, that's true philosophy, by heaven!
 No narrow precepts, drawn from books and schools;
 But well adapted to the bustling world:
 It vindicates a licence of desire.
 My son, thou hast the hoary head in youth!
 Yet after all, I've so much of religion,
 I own, a secret something often frustrates
 The best concerted knaveries.

SALEH.

Be it so!
 But is not war a duty? Nature's fate?
 We're made to fight; we ought to follow nature;
 And with the fire of Heroes nobly brave
 The pow'r and policy of earth and heaven.

BASHI.

Just in the nick! Here comes the christian patriarch.
 The point he'll soon decide.

SALEH:

How he harangues !
 The sanctimonious fellow loves to preach.
 Let me amuse him in a solemn strain ;
 And pick occasion to enquire of *Myrza*.

BASHI.

Good ! I withdraw.

[Exit Bashi.]

Enter Patriarch.

SALEH.

Good venerable father !
 You are not us'd to camps, and arms, and blood :
 Your holy mind is occupy'd with heaven.
 You wou'd prefer obscurity and ease
 To all the wealth and glory of the world.

PATR.

Young man ! your heart is volatile and gay :
 You may deride me (and I know you will)
 If I despise what, doubtless, you esteem,
 The pleasures, riches, glories of the world :
 If I avow contempt for deeds of war,
 For pompous triumphs and for plunder'd spoils :
 But let me tell you, nobleness of soul
 Shines not in deeds destructive to mankind :
 True nobleness, young man, is to procure
 The happiness and order of our race :
 Those grow from love, the harmony of minds ;
 True glory, therefore, glory most divine,
 Is kindly strengthening in the hearts of men
 That bond of union. Wise and gracious Heaven
 Stamps it the grand condition, to obtain
 The bliss and glory of another world,
 That we promote the happiness of this.

What

What are the ruffian joys of spoils and triumphs
 To charm a rational immortal being ?
 At least, if won by practices unjust ?
 Such spoils are stately monuments of guilt ;
 Such triumphs, infamy, in right esteem.
 Too true ! the Vulgar, ideot-like, admire
 Tumultuous mischief, idle noise and show :
 Such deeds may make you deities to them.
 And more—since getting vulgar admiration,
 And boundlessly accumulating gold,
 Subserve to indolence and wanton passions,
 Such deeds may ravish low ignoble minds
 With all the wild insanity of joy :
 But ah, the phrenzy of a mob soon changes ;
 And vice's gay delirium soon expires ;
 The joy is all found vanity, and ends
 In bitterness of woe.
 Man is a rational, immortal being ;
 Truth is his law, his interest is eternity :
 He finds each inconsistency with his nature
 Is so much folly, so much self-fought misery.
 He finds, at last, *the Honest is the best* :
The Honest, Nature's basis, Reason's friend,
 And God's and Virtue's sovereign delight.

SALEH.

You half confound me ! I deride you !—No !
 I own my soul's alarm'd ! I fancy, few
 Will practise as you preach. Missed by custom,
 We place all nobleness in feats of war :
 With us the highest praise is martial science :
 And martial triumph is the highest glory.

PATR.

When war is necessary it is just :

When reason fails, the last appeal is war.
 Valor, deriv'd from an exalted motive,
 Defending justice, liberty, and truth,
 With risque of life, is nobleness indeed ;
 And sets men up above the common level :
 Ferocity, that fights for other ends,
 For pastime, for dominion, for renown,
 Declaring war against the human race,
 Is brutal, diabolical.

SALEH.

O father !
 I cannot argue, nor have skill to hear.
 How fares the noble, good, unhappy *Myrza* ?

PATR.

Kind Sir, I know not. When you speak his name
 The crimson tide within me backward rolls.
 I've sought him round through our frequented walks :
 Alas, I find him not.

SALEH.

What cause of fear ?
 He's much esteem'd and lov'd amongst us all.
 We court his company : Delight, instruction
 Blend in his conversation, as in yours.
 Aye, your tuition wins him this regard !
 I mourn, when I reflect how much I lost,
 By wanting such a monitor as *Myrza's*.

PATR.

I thank you, Sir : Your flattery's obliging.
 The Prince has bright and amiable parts,
 Which ev'n in infancy outstripp'd my hopes,
 And now exalt him more than regal station.

In

In my applauding him, don't think me vain,
 As if in *Myrza's* praise I blaz'd my own.
 You know, instruction unimbib'd is lost:
 Poor is the harvest of a barren soil.
 Art, in comparison with happy nature,
 Is like a pebble vying with a star.
 Laborious art emits a feeble ray;
 Spontaneous nature shines with ardent glow,
 Art lends but polish; nature must impart
 Th' intrinsic excellence, the fire divine.

SALEH.

Why, very right!—It seems ev'n good dame Nature
 Is partial to her children, none knows why.

PATR.

Sir, she distributes with a prudent hand:
 Always enough, if properly employ'd.
 Particular persons have, like different climes,
 Peculiar temperatures for various ends,
 Fitly dispos'd to benefit the whole.
 Some places boast the richest fruits or ores,
 A purer atmosphere or warmer sun;
 But from that very good derive some evil:
 So parts and virtues of superior vigor
 Have their peculiar incommodities;
 Are more expos'd to arduous exertions;
 Are more beset with envious wrongs; and therefore
 Create more toil and danger to their owners.

SALEH.

Good father, you delight me!—I perceive,
 We are not so unequal as I thought.
 The more I hear, the more do I lament
 I was not taught like *Myrza*.

D 5

PATR.

PATR.

Ah, kind Sir !
I hope your fortunes ne'er will be like his.
I tender *Myrza* with paternal feelings.
His absence gives me pain.

SALEH.

O good old man !
He's in some tent. Delectable discourse
Oft steals attention from the lapse of time.

PATR.

I thank you, Sir, I cannot but have fears,
Unpleasing apprehensions !

SALEH.

Apprehensions ?

PATR.

Most men, when harrafs'd long by hard distress,
And frequently provok'd by recent wrongs,
Grow quite impatient, negligent of life,
And think ev'n prudence vain.

SALEH.

Can you conceive——

PATR.

Ah, nothing ! Sore perplex'd !
Adieu, good Sir !—If you espy the Prince,
Please to acquaint him that I pass'd this way.

[*Exit Patr.*

Enter Bash.

SALEH,

I'm overjoy'd !

BASHI.

BASHI.

At what, dear *Saleh*?

SALEH.

Hope!—

BASHI.

Hope!—Were it fact!—What tidings, my good fellow?

SALEH.

Myrza is missing; this old saint has fears.
He'll not explain them.

BASHI.

We, perhaps, can guess them.
Saleh, the Shah!—His guards;—They move this way.

SALEH.

Infernal tyrant! Let us seize him here.

BASHI.

Madness! Impossible amidst his guards!
The camp wou'd be o'erwhelm'd with consternation,
Tumult, revolt, and slaughter; half our purpose
If not our lives, be lost.

SALEH.

No matter, *Bashi*.
My bosom burns! I tremble with impatience
To do a deed on that illustrious monster,
Which may rank *Saleh* with immortal heroes.
Fast friends at hand, no strangers to our wishes,
We cannot fail. And lo, retreat's secure
To *Ali*'s ambuscade behind the mountains.

BASHI.

BASHI.

I tell thee, *Saleh*, safety and the spoil
 To me are objects more than *Nadir's* death.
 Now let us deify the potent fiend;
 And be content, if such an evil Pow'r
 Accept of flattery: 'Tis a cheap oblation.

SALEH.

Faith! over zeal may waken his distrust.
 The tyrant has a piercing penetration.

BASHI.

I know it, *Saleh*.——Witty folks are vain.
 Flattery yourself advis'd; it answer'd well.
 Silence betrays a sullen condemnation.
 Let praise supply vacuity of worth,
 And fashion handsome virtues out of crimes.
 There's many a one, from int'rest, pride, or shame,
 Hates to be call'd what he delights to be;
 And loves encomiums which he least deserves.
 Another's calling *scoundrel*, *fool*, and *knave*,
 Enrages him, like a provoked boar;
 While his own actions, to the crowded world,
 Declare more impudently just the same.
 Failings and vices are a kind of secrets,
 One tells himself, and wou'd have others keep.
 The worst desire to be esteem'd the best,
 When fair esteem conduces to their ends.
 No fear, high-season'd flattery will cloy,
 If only vehicled with proper art.

SALEH.

There lies the point!

Enter

Enter Nadir, with guards.

NADIR.

My worthy lords, on duty!
 I ever found you thus! I fear no factions,
 With friends so fast and prudent by my side.
 Ye golden pillars of the public weal!
 You make me happy! You deserve reward.
 We name thee, *Bashi*, in young *Ali*'s room,
 To govern *Mesched*. Curse the base young traitor!
 Rebellion crush'd, tranquillity restor'd,
 Thou may'st, retiring thither full of honor,
 Enjoy old age in affluence and ease.
Saleh shall be promoted in command;
 And rise in honors, as he grows in merit.

BASHI.

Illustrious monarch! Jewel of the world!
 Bright as the moon! refulgent as the sun!
 Your slave's oppress'd!—Ye saints!—I cannot utter
 My gratitude.—Excuse my fault'ring voice—
 How can I thank enough my Sovereign's grace.

SALEH.

Sublime, munificent, renowned King!
 Your slave will study to deserve your favor:
 Always shall deem your royal approbation
 The highest honor, and the best reward.

NADIR.

You're very dutiful!—The Tartar troops
 Prepare to march against that traitor, *Ali*:
 Relax the Persians after their fatigues:
 So long a series of laborious toils
 Makes respite welcome as a shady fountain.

With

With free indulgence let them pass the night
 In festive pleasures and refreshing rest,
 As inclination leads. Dismiss as many
 From irksome watch, as may be spar'd with safety.

BASHI.

Most gracious King ! still provident and tender
 To bless your subjects !

SALEH.

Not the meanest slave
 Goes unregarded of your royal care.

[*Ex. Bashi and Saleh.*

Enter Abdul.

NADIR.

Abdul, is all got ready ?——Do the troops
 Obey command with wish'd alacrity ?

ABDUL.

Yes, happy Sovereign ! Not a man recedes !
 The motion spreads with eagerness and heat,
 As if one spirit actuated all.

NADIR.

Be quick and punctual : Let nothing fail
 For want of signals and right martial conduct.
 My orders to the Persians are to rest,
 Or drink a deep oblivion to their toils.
 Do thou remember what an arduous task
 Thy arm sustains : Thou must not drink nor slumber.

ABDUL.

Your slave is all obedience, all alert,
 And vigilant as panthers watching prey :
 Let them who drink and sleep, awake no more.

NADIR.

NADIR.

Enough, good *Abdul*! — Hasten to thy business.

[*Ex. Nadir and Abdul.*]

Enter Bashi and Saleh.

SALEH.

What means this miracle? 'Tis most amazing
To find the Shah so suddenly grown human!
He us'd to dictate like a roaring lion.
The dread of *Ali* humbles his disdain.

BASHI.

Curse on this humor! it portends no good.
His way has been, with diabolic art,
To raise the wretch his malice doom'd to fall.
The stupid people thought such wretch a favorite,
Who cou'd not suffer but for great offence.

SALEH.

By heav'n you pierce me! — S'death! I know it well!
I previously adduc'd the same remark.
Nothing, except his cruelty, exceeds
His pregnant artifice and specious carriage.
He kens the weakness of the human heart,
The secret springs and stops of all the passions,

BASHI.

I cannot trust the sunshine of a sky,
So oft disturb'd with hurricanes and storms.
We must be watchful; and provide with speed
To gain a shelter, should a cloud arise.

SALEH.

I find we must.

BASHI.

BASHI.

His offers, if sincere,
Are low and trivial to the terms of *Ali*.

SALEH.

The youth is generous. He will need us more
Than subtil *Nadir*.

BASHI.

Nadir breaks his friends,
Like staves of office, when his work is done.

BASHI.

Ali must grant us any terms we ask.

SALEH.

Then, from this moment firmly I resolve,
O *Nadir*! thy destruction.—True or false
Thy tempting offers, they present no charms
To gratify the generous breast of *Saleh*.
It pants for glory, which I'll nobly seize,
By self-authority, nor wait thy nod.
My soul disdains to be the servile wretch,
Whose place and pow'r depend on thy creation.

BASHI.

Heroic *Saleh*! —By the prophet's beard,
Such language, like the warlike trumpet's sound,
Might raise the spirit of a dull poltroon.
Eternally thy friend is ancient *Bashi*.

SALEH.

Why, glory, *Bashi*, is a word of charms,
A thought of grandeur, firing all the soul.
It draws the world's attention, and employs

The

The tongue of eloquence, the pen of wit;
 Proud princes envy, humble crowds adore.
 The man, who can reflect on his own glory,
 Shining thro' ages, in the present hour
 Enjoys eternity; he hears applause
 From worlds unknown, and multitudes unborn.

BASHI.

Imagination is a great magician!
 I own, there is a mighty charm in praise:
 Immensely pleasing is the flattering thought
 Of leaving in the world a pompous name.
 But cooler age resigns such airy views
 For more substantial ones of solid gold.
 I once fought glory, idol of my soul!
 And wou'd have perish'd for a blast of fame.
 What stupid folly! Could her loudest clarion
 Awaken ravishment in Death's dull ear?
 Life is by much too dear a price for fame.
 Let my experience benefit my friend.
 Proceed with caution; courage rein with skill;
 And safety prize in common with applause.
 Attempt not rashly on the Tyrant's life;
 Rather by other's hazard let him die.

END OF ACT III.

A C T IV.

S C E N E, NADIR'S TENT.

Enter MYRZA, disguised as a slave, and a Slave.

MYRZA.

WHAT say'st? Art thou a *Georgian*?

SLAVE.

Yes, O *Myrza*! —

And once I liv'd in affluence: I enjoyed
 With sweet tranquillity the kind esteem
 Of all the estimable. The neighb'ring poor,
 Rich in my bounty, bless'd me as I pass'd;
 And importun'd the Majesty of Heav'n
 To make me happy. — On the day of battle,
 Near you, my prince, I fought; O gallant *Myrza*!
 Determin'd, rather than behold my king
 And country fall, to perish in the field.
 But just as you intrepidly led on
 Your rally'd squadrons to the final charge,
 I saw you taken; then our remnant troops,
 Desponding, dropp'd their arms. It was my lot
 To meet the eye of this infernal tyrant,
 Who clos'd misfortune with this last disgrace,
 Made me a slave in his detested presence.
 I may indeed complain of my hard fortunes
 And cruel wrongs; but when I see my prince's
 Immensely greater — I despise my own! *(weeps.*

MYRZA.

MYRZA.

My generous countryman ! take this. *(gives a ring.*
 If fate decrees, that *Myrza* reascend
 The Georgian throne (and who can tell what heaven
 Reserves in store ?) I will remember thee :
 My lenient bounteous hand shall heal thy woes.

SLAVE.

Alas, my Prince ! this perilous attempt——

MYRZA.

Leave that to heav'n and me. If it miscarry,
 I shall not long be griev'd. Let *Nadir* die,
 I shall be satisfy'd, if I die too.
 Thanks for thy friendly conduct of me hither :
 My blessing, and farewell !

SLAVE.

Heav'n guard my prince !

[Exit.

MYRZA.

This haughty tyrant, bloated with success,
 Disdains all overtures ; and scorns a prince,
 Whom passive heav'n permits to wear his chains.
 We know, the wicked often are exalted
 To aggravate their fall. I trust in heaven !
 Justice is sure, tho' slow. Her great decree
 On him perhaps must issue by my hand.

(Myrza hides himself.

Enter Circassia.

CIRCASSIA.

Witness, ye conscious spirits, hovering round !
 Was ever grief like mine ? How am I lost !
 Not one kind friend ; not one to bless my eyes !

Not

Not one to yield the melancholy comfort
 Of mere condolence ! No relief for me,
 But lone complaint, expressing thus my griefs
 To senseless curtains !—senseless, yet not deaf
 To cries of misery more than their rude owner.
 This is a viper's den !—How dire a scene !
 How far from former, when indulgent parents
 Anticipated all my pleasing wishes,
 Nurs'd all my gay desires ! Each gazing eye
 Regarded me with gladness ; every tongue
 Flatter'd and blest'd me. O ye golden days !
 Are ye all vanish'd, as a morning-dream ?
 Vanish'd !—O dreadful !—Never to return !

Enter Zara.

ZARA.

Circassia, why alone ? It must not be :
 Comfort your heart ; don't cherish fruitless sorrow.

CIRCASSIA.

I chuse to be alone ; so leave me !

ZARA.

Nay !
 Permit me to esteem you. Tender pity
 Bends sweetly over none, but *blameless* grief.
 Will utterance ease you, open all your soul :
 I'll keep your secrets as my holy vows.

CIRCASSIA.

My grief is blameless. Wou'd you knew my heart!
 Utterance might ease me : but the doleful tale
 Can I begin ?—A captive orphan, thus,
 Expecting every moment—worse than death !
 My friends all lost ! my dear protectors dead !

My

My honor'd father, my lov'd brother fell,
 Amid the horrid slaughter of that day,
 That woeful day, which saw my country fall.
 My tender mother!—Her I saw expire!
 The wounding news, as lightening pierc'd her dead.
 The ruffians tore me from her breathless corps;
 And dragg'd me, nigh as lifeless, into bonds.
 O kill me, grief!—My stubborn aking heart!
 Wilt thou not break with all thy load of woes?

ZARA.

Unhappy maid! A load of woes indeed!

CIRCASSIA.

Fate yet had ills, unnumber'd ills in store:
 Many are present; many threat to come.
 O *Myrza*! *Myrza*! My unhappy prince!

ZARA.

Hah! What of *Myrza*?

CIRCASSIA.

When the chance of war
 Had made us equal; and in one calamity
 Involv'd the prince and slave; we often met:
 He gaz'd on me, and with a tender eye;
 Else my imprudence made me think he did.
 His gentle soothings had a pow'rful charm:
 His presence, like an angel's, joy'd my heart;
 And beam'd mild solace through misfortune's gloom.
 Blest in his conversation and his smiles,
 I seem'd in heaven, where saints forget their sorrows.

ZARA.

A pleasing pang then shot through my fond heart.

Sweet

Sweet anguish !—dear remembrance !—Here, *Circassia*,
I feel your glowings : mine are just the same.

CIRCASSIA.

Now are we parted ; torn asunder ! O,
To meet no more ! Far better had we never !
When I reflect, how indiscreet was I
To let my heart indulge so fond a flame !
He ne'er avowed his. And, if he had,
What hopes for us while captives ? Nay, wou'd *Myrza*,
If unrestrain'd, degrade himself with me ?
How cou'd my poor vain heart aspire so high ?
Yet it had no ambition ; all was love.

ZARA.

Oh, Oh, *Circassia* ! That goes thro' my heart !
My bosom heaves and bleeds at every word.
My own past scenes rise full and fresh in view.
Sweet mercy ! how transform'd ! O gracious heav'n !
You have not half the cause for grief, as I :
Lov'd I have been, and courted and caress'd :
You ne'er was so by *Myrza*. Ha ? Proceed !
If death were in't, I'd listen to the tale.

CIRCASSIA.

Myrza not love ? I will believe he did ;
Else what cou'd mean the softness of his voice,
The liquid sparkles of his gazing eye,
Modest demeanor, and obliging care,
Which found my wants ; and oft, to my surprize,
Before I felt them furnish'd their supply.
Sure, this was love ?

ZARA.

No eloquence of tongue

Utters

Utters the fondness of the heart so well.
That was the tender flame.

CIRCASSIA.

The bliss of life !
Sadly perverted by my wayward fate,
'Tis direst bane and woe.

ZARA.

Just so is mine !
I cannot listen longer ! I shall die !
Each accent pierces like a dagger's point ! [Ex. Zara.

CIRCASSIA, *sola.*

Myrza ! dear name !—sweet *Myrza* !—I cou'd dwell
Musing for ever on thy manly charms,
Counting them o'er, admiring one by one :
But it were like a madman's pride, to lodge
Thy lovely image in this ruin'd breast.
Indeed, contrasting thee with savage *Nadir*,
Will blazon his deformity the more,
And steel my soul to him. It has that use ;
And that's no trivial moment. My chaste virtue
Gets fortitude from love, while *Myrza's* image
Is shrin'd its dear palladium.

MYRZA (*discovering himself*)

Myrza's self
Shall be thy virtue's guardian, lovely maid !
His life's involv'd in thine.

CIRCASSIA.

O, *Myrza* ! *Myrza* ! (*fainting.* *Myrza supports her.*

MYRZA.

Who loves thee more than life ! Look up and bless him !
CIRCASSIA.

CIRCASSIA.

I do!—My love!

MYRZA.

My angel!—

CIRCASSIA.

O forgive!—

MYRZA.

Nay, do not blush: The word becomes those lips.
The sweet sincere confession gives me joy,
More than a pearl, of price to buy a crown.
From him you most wish happy, wou'd you hide
The choicest blessing? Ha? Wou'd that be kind?

CIRCASSIA.

My love! accept my heart!

MYRZA.

Best gift of heaven!
So I embrace it; and return you mine.
Assist me, gracious Giver, to be thankful!
Rapture to you and reverence to him
Most gladfomly expand my beating heart.
These mix'd with other less benign sensations,
My bosom feels as it ne'er felt before—
Such soft delight and anguish!—so extreme!
O cou'd I make thee happy!

CIRCASSIA.

Generous Prince!

The piercing thought renews, augments my griefs!
I had forgotten! When I recollect
The place, the danger, all my soul is horror!
This place is death! Alas! why came you hither?

MYRZA.

MYRZA.

When you are here, my charmer, can you ask?
For thee shou'd I be slow to risque a life,
Which were a curse without thee? No, by heav'n!—
Nadir shall die! This hand shall prostrate *Nadir*!

CIRCASSIA.

O *Myrza*, save yourself, wou'd you save me!
That rash adventure wou'd to both be fatal.
O save your life! Retire, or lie conceal'd.
If you *will* stay, I'll visit your retreat,
Salute with sighs, and whisper information,
As long as stolen interviews are safe:
But, dearer than my soul! I pray, retire:
With speed, with speed retire!

MYRZA.

My lov'd *Circassia*!
Can you in *Nadir's* tent one night abide,
Without——? My soul, it flames!—This well-
nerv'd arm——

CIRCASSIA.

O save your precious life! remain conceal'd!
Hope's not extinguish'd. His fair favorite, *Zara*,
Will mediate my dismissal.

MYRZA.

Is that all?
A slender twigg indeed!

CIRCASSIA.

Judge by yourself!——
(Alas! my prince! too great a martyr you
To fond enthusiasm!)—Can the Tyrant's breast

E

Resist

Resist the charm ? Was e'er the rudest hind
Inexorable to the fair, he lov'd ?

MYRZA.

I'll tarry the event.

CIRCASSIA.

Away ! Away !

I hear a sound of feet.

(Myrza hides himself.)

Enter Zara.

ZARA.

Circassia, pardon.

To leave you was uncourteous.

CIRCASSIA.

Gentle Zara,

Your absence pleas'd me. That is more uncourteous.

Not that I slight you : Solitude is best

For one like me, whose melancholy mood

Delights supremely in the gloom of woe.

Wou'd I were as the shepherdes, who fled

To woods and mountains from the shock of war !

Who, lonely wandering in the desert wild,

Chaunts her distress ; or, sitting on a rock,

Surveys and weeps the ruins of her country !

I might have peace, and languish out my days

With satisfaction to what waits me here.

ZARA.

I'll tell you quickly, if my throbbing breast,

And aking heart permit the use of speech,

What waits you here.

CIRCASSIA.

O Zara, what !

ZARA.

ZARA.

Sad news! ———

No satisfaction, but in *Nadir's* arms!

That brutal Tyrant (yes, I'll call him names)

I see him justly! I detest him now,

With hatred equal to my former love.

CIRCASSIA.

O wretched me! will nothing melt that heart,

That cruel heart! ——— Then lost am I indeed!

ZARA.

Not more than I, *Circassia*! ——— Thus he spake:

And look'd so sternly — “Thou perfidious woman!

“Hast thou abus'd my confidence; and turn'd

“That Lady's heart against her gracious Lord?

“Must I relinquish all my joys for thee?

“Begone, detested! See my face no more,

“Till thou retrieve thy fault.” — His angry voice

Yet thunders in my ears: His threatening eye

Yet lightens in my face: My frame all trembles!

I am the most undone!

CIRCASSIA.

And all through me! ———

Alas! that I occasion thus distress,

Whose constant care has been imparting joy!

Anguish redoubles, thinking I'm the ruin

Of them who love me. Barbarous fortune! O!

Empty thy quiver at my head alone!

Touch not my friends! Let them not feel one shaft,

One smallest momentary pang for me!

Punish *me* all; and dying I will thank thee.

ZARA.

No! good *Circassia*! Blame be far from you!

This complicated, this immense distress,
 Springs all from that bad man. Behold in him
 What mischief, when the will is arm'd with power,
 One wicked man may do.—I am astonish'd
 How ought so odious e'er attach'd my heart.
 My punish'd bosom! where was prudence fled,
 When I beheld him with a partial eye,
 And thought him wholly tendernefs and love?
 My foolish fondness, spite of all I saw,
 Of all I heard, detestable and mean,
 Dissembled all his faults, pronounc'd him good.
 Alas, how we betray ourselves to ruin!
 Fatal enchantment of an amorous mind!
 I hop'd in him a generous constant lover;
 Nor then was vain ambition from my heart.
 Wretched delusions! empty hopes!——I long'd
 To clasp these tender arms around a viper:
 Now it has stung my bosom. O despair!
 My only portion!—O imprudent choice!

CIRCASSIA.

Wou'd I were nothing!——Sink and be no more,
 Devoutly do I wish.—O *Myrza!* *Myrza!*

ZARA.

Curse on the sex! Ne'er plague yourself for him!

CIRCASSIA.

He's not a *Nadir*.

ZARA.

I will scarce believe it.
 I have been told, indeed, the prince is amiable;
 So thought I *Nadir*.

CIRCASSIA

CIRCASSIA.

Myrza, fure, is all
To justify a woman's fond esteem.

ZARA.

Now comes the tyrant.

[Exit.

CIRCASSIA.

O support me, Heav'n !

Enter Nadir.

NADIR.

Bright virgin ! tremble not at sight of me :
You reverence majesty with too much awe :
For you I'd cast my diadem away.
In me behold a lover and a friend.
Believe me, Virgin, *Nadir's* bosom blooms
With rosy love, the blossom of your eye.

CIRCASSIA.

O mighty Prince ! have pity on your slave !

NADIR.

I will do more : I'll love her.

CIRCASSIA.

Sire, your pity
Suits me far better than your love.

NADIR.

Both suit.

Sweet maid ! My soul is charmed, when you speak :
By heav'n thou hast an angel's look and voice.
Virgins of paradise excel not thee !
Our prophet may enjoy, by me unrivall'd,
Their heav'nly charms, indulge me only thine.

CIRCASSIA.

Forbear, great Prince!—Whatever you may be,
I am a poor unhappy mortal woman.

NADIR.

Wou'd immortality were mine to give,
For your dear sake! It surely shou'd be thine.
All that I can, I'll make you—rich and happy.
The world's great victor vanquish'd falls to you;
And fondly begs you to accept with smiles
All joy, that love and *Nadir* can bestow.

CIRCASSIA.

Confer the fulness of your bounty where
It may do good. Insensible am I,
And all unworthy. Those amazing evils,
By your invasion brought upon my friends,
Blasted my heart and deaden'd it to joy. *(weeps.)*

NADIR.

Not weep, dear maid!—It was the chance of war.
I wish I cou'd restore them for your sake!
That is impossible!—What may be done—
Let your misfortune be aton'd by love.

CIRCASSIA.

Impossible, as 'tis to raise the dead.
Love can't be forc'd; love can't be bought with gems.
You know, I ought not—and I know, I cannot—

NADIR.

Refuse, fair creature! that enchanting hand.

CIRCASSIA.

Why will you, Sire, accumulate distress?
I cannot do what I abhor to name.

NADIR.

NADIR.

Your inexperience makes you spurn your good.
 Young virgin-minds are very nice in love :
 Their simple fancies form such delicate
 Abstracted sentiments of that soft passion,
 They often need compulsion to be happy.

CIRCASSIA.

Compulsion, Prince!——O what a word is that !
 In this concern, compulsion from no plea
 Has any right—All reason must allow !——
 The right is sympathy and cordial choice.
 Parents themselves, our dear and honor'd parents,
 Whom nature authorizes and commands
 To guide our judgment and consult our happiness,
 Shou'd not, in this most tender home-felt point,
 Compel their children : Surely, those that do
 Are accessaries to a child's dishonor.
 Then claim not you beyond a parent's right.
 Spare the poor orphan, your excesses made !
 A friendless orphan ! Take not from her too
 The last of comforts, innocence and honor.
 O spare my person.

NADIR.

Brightest maid ! your person .
 Deserves a kingdom and a royal spouse.
 I will adorn it with all earthly pomp ;
 And then adore it, as a saint divine,

CIRCASSIA.

Rather employ me as your meanest slave
 In any servile office : Give me rags ;

Dirt me with drudgery ; so still you leave
Honor and innocence to cheer my sufferings.

NADIR.

Fantastic maid ! You know not what you wish !
Can that fair bosom lodge so mean a thought ?

CIRCASSIA.

Nothing's so mean as wickedness, great Prince !

NADIR.

Circassia, there's no wickedness in love.

CIRCASSIA.

May I demand—Have you a blooming daughter ?

NADIR.

You like a daughter ?—We may have one, Love.
A soft endearment of the nuptial tie,
A little sweet *Circassia*.

CIRCASSIA.

Patience, Heav'n! ———
I cannot bear it! ———

NADIR.

Pardon me, *Circassia*!
I see my fondness carry'd me too far.
I have a daughter.

CIRCASSIA.

Do you love her ?

NADIR.

Yes! —
No lady more, except my dear *Circassia*,

CIRCASSIA.

Wou'd you be pleas'd to have her treated thus ?

NADIR.

What !—courted by the noblest prince on earth ?
My great ambition ! What cou'd please me more ?

CIRCASSIA.

Supposing (what I hope may never be)
In every point your daughter were as I——
You know, Religion's, Honor's sacred laws
Strictly forbid the union, you demand.

NADIR.

Religion ! Honor !—Empty phantoms all !
Contriv'd to awe the superstitious Vulgar !
Religion ! Honor ! What are these, compar'd
With riches, glory, empire, royal love ?

CIRCASSIA.

As mountains are to mole-hills, mighty Prince !
The time will come when even You will think so.
You may be witty at deriding virtue
And scoffing at religion ; but with me,
The voice of Heav'n is still the strongest reason.

NADIR.

Thou beauteous angel ! I was never us'd
To treat a fine young lady like a faint :
But, if I must, religion is my friend.
What says the prophet ?

CIRCASSIA.

I'm a Christian, Sire.

NADIR

NADIR.

Well then, a Christian!—Why are all those charms?
 My pretty doctress, nothing's made in vain.
 Ordain'd of Heav'n to dignify a throne!
 So bright a form is worthy sovereign *Nadir*!
 Divine *Circassia*! you are made for me!

CIRCASSIA.

Proud tyrants may think all things made for them.
 Heav'n has decreed, that duty bound desire.

NADIR.

Proud tyrants!—haughty maid!—You grow too bold.
 That's impudence!—Pray, who and what am I?

CIRCASSIA.

The great destroyer of the earth, vain man!
 In future story that will be your fame.
 A woman tells thee so, whose country groans,
 Whose friends are murder'd and deny'd a grave,
 Thro' thy ambitious, thy enormous crimes.
 I will not shrink; look stern and smite me dead!
 My soul, from truth's insuperable height,
 Looks down upon thee, emperor as thou art,
 And scorns thee as a caitiff, curs'd and vile!——
 Sure I'm inspir'd with courage from above! (aside.

NADIR.

Confusion! horror!——Do I stand to hear
 My majesty revil'd by a base girl!
 What! Shall I whine and court a Christian slave,
 As if she were an Empress? Hell! I blush
 To view my own ridiculous situation!
 Go, scornful slave; I'll make thy spirit stoop.

Convey

Convey her forth!—My will is still obey'd.
I'll meet thee quickly in thy close apartment.

Enter Myrza, unobserved.

MYRZA.

No——I'll prevent thee!——Meet you shall no more
To all eternity.——I trust, this hand
Shall send thee home to that abyss of woe,
Where her pure spirit never shall descend.

(Eunuchs lead out Circassia.)

CIRCASSIA.

O save me from dishonor! Let me die! [Exit.]

(Myrza rushes upon Nadir, who escapes from him.)

NADIR.

Treason!—Affairs!—Murder!——

(Eunuchs seize Myrza, wrest away the dagger, and offer to kill him.)

NADIR.

Hold!——The wretch
Shall perish tortur'd piece by piece; and bear
The direst torments, mortal can endure.
Who art thou, villain?

MYRZA.

Villain! One thou'st wrong'd!
One who defies thy fury in its height!
Thou art a tyrant! Thou deserv'st to die!

NADIR.

The Georgian Prince!—Thou mad ungrateful wretch!

Thou vile assassin ! have I spar'd thy life,
And entertain'd thee graciously for this ?

MYRZA.

My life was never forfeited, like thine.
You took my crown, and robbed me of all
Made life be worth preserving.—Mighty boon !
Dissembling fiend ! to spare this wretched life,
'To languish out in misery in bondage !
Just so a savage brute, of vilest kind,
Wounds its weak prey, and then denies it death,
To sport and wanton with its fears and agonies.
Mercy from thee is crueler than death.

NADIR.

Harden'd assassin ! Mercy thus abus'd
Shall kindle vengeance into tenfold rage.
Such death as thou describest, thou shalt die.

MYRZA.

Fiend ! I despise thee !—Do thy very worst !
Break all these bones ! this flesh and sinews tear !
But first, pluck out my eyes, as thou didst *Riza's* !

NADIR.

Accursed wretch ! Upbraid me with my son !
Dost thou upbraid me with my wretched son ?
Was not my son a traitor ?

MYRZA.

What wert thou ?
What art thou still, thou harden'd arrogance ?
A barbarous robber once, and for thy skill
In fraud and cruelty advanc'd to favor.
Then, gaining influence o'er a paltry crowd,

Didst

Didst thou not spurn good *Thæmas* from his throne;
 And, for security in usurpation,
 Didst thou not murder all the royal race?
 Thy life has all been felony and treason,
 Now crown'd with tyranny, the worst of crimes.
 Thou regicide, usurper, tyrant, fiend!
 Long didst thou merit thy son *Riza's* fate
 Ere he was born—That diadem is witness!

NADIR.

Perdition seize thee!——Drag him to the rack!
 I'll see thee, hear thee, slowly writh'd to death!
 I'll feast my eyes with seeing thee expire!
 My ears shall quaff the music of thy groans!
 (*Guards hurry Myrza forth.*)

Eunuch!

Hasten to *Saleb*: Bid him on the instant
 Select two thousand of the basest fellows,
 Cowards in battle, ruffians in the camp;
 (The task will please such men) I say, let them
 Kill all the Georgian prisoners: Let him look
 That the whole race be smitten with destruction.
 'Tis dangerous keeping tygers in a cage;
 They will not tame by lenity nor rigour:
 They still retain the malice of their nature:
 Only the bars of death can bolt them fast.

[*Exit Eunuch.*]

Heav'n sent me forth into this cursed world,
 Implanting enmity twixt me and man,
 That I might plague the vile flagitious race.
 How they beset me with insidious malice!——
 Like a fell dragon, arm'd with brazen scales,
 Engender'd in some deep volcano's womb,
 Whose eyes dart venom, and whose breath is fire,
 I'll

I'll blast the wretched varlets round my presence.
 A bloody gloomy and immense revenge
 This night shall satiate my raging soul.
 To hell, my foes! Great *Nadir* still shall triumph!

END OF ACT IV.

A C T V.

SCENE, BEFORE BASHI'S TENT.

Enter Slaves, Eunuchs, Centinel.

CENT.

STOP!—This is General *Bashi's* tent.

SLAVE.

Well, centinel,
 Acquaint him, that a royal slave without,
 Has business with him—business of importance.

[*Exit Cent.*]

We come to raise a flame; and what if we
 Perish in the combustion? Such a fate
 Were paradise to this. No curse like slav'ry!
 Most precious liberty! my anxious soul
 Pants earnestly for thee! Thou fovereign charm,
 Breathing through life the spirit of delight!
 All things I'll lose for thee!—Let being perish,
 If thou art lost!—Existence is a curse!—
 Abstracting liberty, our arts and toils

Serve

Serve not ourselves ; but tend to our annoyance ;
 Arm the iniquity—and gild the pride,
 And glut the luxury of vile oppressors.
 The more we merit, more do they exact :
 Such is a slave's reward !—How damn'd that state,
 Where merit makes unhappy.

SECOND SLAVE.

Give us death,
Great God ! or Liberty !—Excuse the prayer !
 It is with this, as many other blessings ;
 We want it by our fault. O pardon, Heaven!—
 What abjects are mankind to fet up monsters
 Of their own species, to be devils o'er them ?
 Worse than idolaters, the dupes not only
 Make their own Gods, but strengthen them with pow'r
 To be their torturers ; not only lavish
 Their choicest treasures, but expend their blood
 To glut the fiends, and aid them to devour them.
 What stupid phrenzy ? Do this, yet complain !—
 Hear how these servile Persians curse their *Nadir* !
 Why curse they him ? They ought to curse themselves :
 They arm him, they support him.—Wretched fools !—
 He's a mere ruff, but for the strength they give him.
 The wicked people make the wicked ruler :
 Their wickednesses are the nerves of his :
 Were they not like him, *Nadir* cou'd not hurt them,

FIRST SLAVE.

All wou'd be tyrants ; therefore all are slaves.

Enter Bash.

BASH.

What is thy business, Slave ?

(Enter Saleh, meeting him.)

SLAVE.

SLAVE.

Most noble General,
To you my business is of vast importance :—
The Shah has given the Tartars cruel orders,
To massacre the Persian troops to-night.
I bring you this discovery.

BASHI.

Is it true?—
Swear by the Coran, what thou say'st is true.

SLAVE.

Sir, I'm a Christian; I decline to swear
By *Mahomet's* oracles. By the supreme
All-knowing God I swear, 'tis true.

BASHI.

How dost thou know?

SLAVE.

I heard the orders given.
This honest Eunuch will confirm my witness.
'Twas heard by *Zara*, Lady of the Harram.
This Lady, vex'd with jealousy, because
The Shah this ev'ning introduc'd a rival,
Enjoin'd us here to tell the thing to *Bashi*.

BASHI.

Here, Centinel!
Take these in custody.—If you speak truth,
(*To Eunuchs, &c.*)
You need not fear; please heav'n, I will reward you.
Submit to be detain'd, till you be try'd. [*Exeunt.*]
If this be true, O *Saleb*, all is lost!
The Tartars here outnumber us: The aid,
Detach'd from *Ali*, must arrive too late.

SALEH.

SALEH.

Despond not, *Bashi*.—Yes, the slave speaks truth :
 Yet all's not lost. I'm bold to hope the best.
 My heart disdains to sink : the more 'tis burden'd,
 The more it rises : it is strong and stubborn.
 And (hark thee, *Bashi*) *Nadir* sends me orders
 To kill the Georgian prisoners on the instant.
 Luckiest event ! I warn'd them of their danger ;
 Then hinted to them offers of deliverance.
 Each quaking soul with transport heard the offer.
 Then with the swords, I made my soldiers carry
 For that intent,—*Bashi*, I arm'd the Georgians.
 Now courage, *Bashi* !—Life !—Those gallant captives,
 Enrag'd at *Nadir* for his cruel purpose,
 And to us grateful for such great deliverance,
 Will help us valiantly.

BASHI.

Along ! along !——
 Trial will prove. This instant lead them forth.
 I am resolv'd to sell our lives most dearly.
 Ye faints ! there is a providence in this !
 Religious hope inspires me !—*Nadir's* plots,
 Discover'd thus, effect their own abortion.

SALEH.

What providence will interpose for us ?

BASHI.

Poor varlets !——
 Not for our merits, but its own wise ends,
 It may be gracious !—Bring those captives on.

[*Exeunt.*

Scene

SCENE changes to NADIR'S TENT.

Enter Nadir and Abdul.

NADIR.

Abdul, I've seen that villain, *Myrza*, die.
 I'm vex'd, he suffer'd such an easy death :
 I meant him tortures equal to his crimes.
 Leading him forth, the villain rush'd away ;
 And pushing thro' the windings of the tent,
 Nearly escap'd ; 'till, luckily, he slipp'd :
 A soldier, in pursuit, transfix'd his breast,
 And brought him back expiring.

ABDUL

Mighty King !
 Asylum of the faithful ! So may all
 Your adversaries perish !

NADIR.

That *Circassia*,
 The Christian beauty, blooming in her grief,
 Like a sweet rose-bud in a pot of flow'rs,
 Incens'd young *Myrza* to this deed of phrenzy.

ABDUL.

A very natural cause ! She is a charmer.

NADIR.

A beauteous form ; a less engaging mind !
 Good heav'n ! what viperous petulance and scorn,
 That female bosom hides beneath its lillies !
 These may be pledges of her love for *Myrza*.
 Now, *Myrza*'s dead, her love of him may die ;
 And leave the little palace of her heart
 For other loves to dwell in.

ABDUL.

ABDUL.

We admit,
A lovely delicacy in the sex
Oft makes them need intreaty to be happy;
But petulance and scorn become them ill.
Can she reject my sovereign?

NADIR.

Yes, she does!
And she reviles me in the prettiest strain!
Sweet rogue, she will requite me all in *Kælat*.

ABDUL.

She's of a stubborn spirit. When the fit
Of peevishness and fullness is past,
She'll be as free and fond as a pleas'd child,
Prattling and playing on its nurse's lap.

NADIR.

She Venus, I Adonis.——Ah! to-night
I must forget her. Quite a different object
Attracts my cares: That dreadful business, *Abdul*!
Hast thou observ'd the Persians?

ABDUL.

Strict on watch.
Your orders are not follow'd: All are sober:
All in their posts: There's neither feast nor song:
A stillness reigns amongst them more than common.

NADIR.

Curse on them, *Abdul*!——Can they brood suspicion?

ABDUL.

My officers, I hope, are faithful men.

NADIR.

NADIR.

Dost thou suspect?—If thou suspectest one,
Seize him directly; beat him till his feet
Drop from his ancles: Through the Tartar camp
Proclaim him—*An incendiary traitor.*

ABDUL.

King of Kings! impervious is the heart.
I have not mark'd the smallest traiterous symptom.

NADIR.

Abdul, I tell thee, I gave private orders
To *Saleb*, to dispatch the Georgian prisoners:
Thou know'st, for this I had a double reason,
Revenge on them, advantage on the Persians.
Perhaps the curious rascals are amus'd
About the execution of those orders.
Sound, sound the matter. Act discreetly, *Abdul*.
The stated time of midnight is not yet;
But, if thou judgest any treason brooding,
Dispatch the work off hand. Thou know'st, each
moment,
Fresh perils gather.

ABDUL.

So I am afraid.

NADIR.

Within this hour, my brave and gallant Tartars,
Rush on with sabres! hew them to the ground!
O'erwhelm them with destruction, like a storm
Of hail and light'ning, cataracting down
From loaden clouds upon a field of grain.

ABDUL.

The troops are ready——wait your high command!

Issue

Issue the signal ; overthrow and death,
 Like conflagration, blown to sudden blaze
 By boisterous winds, shall overspread the plain.
 Nothing can stand against the Tartar valor !

NADIR.

Ardor delightful ! *Abdul*, I embrace thee ! (*embracing*)
 May every Tartar glow with equal ardor !
 Confidence adds dexterity and vigor,
 While palsy'd diffidence each pow'r disarms.
 Prove by exploits the eminence, you claim
 In fortitude and glory.—Go, and prosper !——

ABDUL.

With all obedience.

[*Exit Abdul.*]

NADIR, *solus.*

Torture ! tofs'd and torn !
 Passions, like hell's explosions, rend my soul !
 'Tis nothing, as I oft and oft imagin'd !
 I thought, this faction crush'd, that foe subdu'd,
 My realms wou'd be a well-fenc'd weeded garden,
 Where ills wou'd either lurk or keep aloof,
 During *my* day ; and *Nadir* might, securely,
 Repose at ease, or revel with his dames.
 I am deceiv'd : I find the world so fruitful
 Of poisonous evils, that I half believe
 The oracle, which tells us, God, to blast them,
 Will send an universal conflagration :
 Men's villanies confirm it : Nothing less
 Can thoroughly suppress them. I have done
 What man can do ! 'Tis endless ! I am tir'd :
 But self-defence constrains me to be doing.
 Like one that swims for life in the rough ocean,
 I've struggled, till I'm dash'd, and bruis'd, and spent.

What

What wou'd I give to gain that peaceful shore,
 Where I might lay this load of misery down!
 Sleep shuns to close my eyes; but I'll retire
 And court a moment's calm. [Exit Nadir.]

Enter Zara.

ZARA.

O Tyrant! thank
 Thy ill designs and doings for thy woes.
 Righteous is heav'n, and wise is its decree,
 Ordaining guilt to be its own tormentor:
 All its torments within its baleful vortex;
 But finally, its impious authors most.
 How wretched is this man!

Enter Circassia.

CIRCASSIA.

O come relief!
 Come welcome death, my only balm of woe!
 Beyond the grave my soul has nought to dread.

ZARA.

Circassia! dear *Circassia!*—This sad night,
Nadir no more insults you. He is rack'd;
 The tyrant's rack'd; and vainly courts repose.
 I overheard him, with the Tartar Chief,
 Devising to profane the gloom with slaughter,

CIRCASSIA.

With slaughter, *Zara*?—O! I bode too well!
 The death of *Myrza* gluts not his revenge:
 The Georgian prisoners must be butcher'd too,
 For their dear prince's error—No! for mine!
 The fault was mine! Thro' me dear *Myrza* fell!
 'Tis I provoke; the unoffending bleed.

Lamented

Lamented innocents ! I've slain you all !
Heav'n, pity, pardon, poor distress'd *Circassia* !

ZARA.

Dear angel, how you rave !—For what ?—Be calm.
Desponding hearts are ever boding ills ;
And raising spectres for their own affright.
Result what will, you're blameless ; and in vain
You pull the galling cord. Be still ! Submit !
His hideous cruelties you can't prevent.

CIRCASSIA.

No !—That's the thought, which wounds me. Once
I might.

On my poor conduct turn'd the fate of thousands,
And—And—Of him—of him I dearly lov'd.
Alas, that on my frailty ever lay
So vast a peril ! Over-try'd I fell.

ZARA.

Fell ! How *Circassia* !

CIRCASSIA.

By provoking *Nadir*.
I might have sooth'd him ; nay, resign'd and dy'd :
For what am I to *Myrza* and his people ?—
My countrymen had scap'd ; perhaps my Prince.
O *Myrza* ! hovers thy sweet spirit nigh,
Pity my weakness ; pardon poor *Circassia*,
Thy too beloved bane.

Enter *Myrza*.

MYRZA.

'See ! *Myrza* lives !

ZARA.

ZARA.

Protect us, Heav'n ! [*Exit affrighted. Circassia fainting.*]

MYRZA.

My love ! I have escap'd !
 I live unhurt, to be thy guardian still.
 I cou'd not hear you, and refrain to lend
 The speediest balm to your despairing heart.
 Yet I foresaw, and fear'd to give surprize.
 Recover and take comfort.—Heav'n forbid,
 My life shou'd be thy death ! I then shall wish,
 That I had dy'd indeed.

CIRCASSIA.

O, do you live ?
 That is a rapturous comfort !—I'm content.
 What miracle is this ?

MYRZA.

Almost a miracle
 Rescu'd thy *Myrza* from their furious hands.
 As forth they dragg'd me with tumultuous rage,
 I rush'd away ; methinks I almost flew,
 And shot thro' fifty mazes of this tent :
 At length, an Eunuch standing in my way,
 I push'd him violently to the ground :
 In the obscure, they seized him for *Myrza*.
 I heard their menaces ; I heard his groans ;
 Poor wretch ! he dy'd for *Myrza*.

CIRCASSIA.

Gracious mercy !
 Now flee directly from this monster's den ;
 And live while Heav'n permits. At once ! adieu !

MYRZA.

MYRZA.

What ! and leave thee ? leave thee a prey to *Nadir* ?
No, dear *Circassia* ! I will live with thee ;
Or for Thee bleed and die.

Enter two Eunuchs. Circassia shrieks. Myrza draws his sword, and stands in a posture of defence. Circassia throws herself before Myrza, pointing to her breast.

CIRCASSIA.

O *Myrza* ! *Myrza* !—leave not me behind !

First EUNUCH.

Fear not, imperial Lady, we are friends.
Slave, sheath thy sword : What wou'd thy madness do
May I presume, ——— (*assisting Circassia*)
Imperial mistress, rise !
Know Us for guardians of your life and peace.——
In this your slave, we see, you much confide :
We claim no less, since your high exaltation,
To be your slaves—obsequious more than he.
Eunuchs we are to the illustrious Shah :
Our honourable and delightful office
Is meet attendance on the royal fair.

MYRZA.

Ye smooth-tongu'd !—— (*aside*)

CIRCASSIA.

O, for mercy ! —— Friendly Sirs ! (*aside to Myrza.*)
This honest, zealous, too officious slave,
(To me endear'd by try'd fidelity,
As I to him by gentleness and bounty)
Anxious to know my state, made this intrusion.
Forgive him This —— a fault that's meritorious.

F

Second

Second EUNUCH.

Divineſt Excellence ! like ſtar-bright heaven,
 Shining ſerenely on the proſtrate earth !
 Your ſlaves with raviſhment admire your charms,
 Your mild demeanor and your gracious mind :
 In days, when angels deign'd to viſit men,
 We might, unblam'd, have been deceiv'd in you ;
 And at your feet ador'd.

CIRCASSIA.

O let your deeds
 Flow like your words in ſoftneſs and regard !
 Forgive my ſlave, who, thoughtleſs of your customs,
 Abruptly enter'd where 'tis death to tread.

First EUNUCH.

Madam, ſecure, as *Mahomet* who dwells
 Among bright virgins, on the flow'ry plains
 Of the eternal paradise on high,
 Are both your ſlave and you.

CIRCASSIA.

Moſt ardent thanks
 Accept, good Eunuchs, from my inmoſt ſoul !
 May I beſeech you to enhance the boon—
 Guard his concealment from unfriendly eyes ;
 And, with occaſion, help him to retire
 Out of the tent and camp ?

First EUNUCH.

Madam, I will.

Second EUNUCH.

By *Mahomet*, I will.

First

First EUNUCH.

Imperial dame!
Hereafter, in the sphere of joy and glory,
When you shall *Nadir's* golden couch ascend,
Will you remember Us, your friendly slaves;
And deign, propitious, your omnific smile?

CIRCASSIA.

Good Sirs, I shall be happy to repay you. [*Ex. omnes.*]

SCENE changes to a Space in the Camp.

Enter Saleh, Officers and Soldiers.

SALEH.

Halt! —————

Here is our station. We must guard this pass.
Watch the defiles, and bar communication
Betwixt the Tartar camp and *Nadir's* guards.

Hark! ——— (*a noise*)

Friends and fellow-soldiers, —steady! steady!
The work of slaughter rages on apace:
Our turn approaches.

OFFICER.

Sir, the lurking Shah
Is chiefly to be dreaded.

SALEH.

He'll not stir.
The total brunt and blame of this foul work
He means to cast on *Abdul*. Us he thinks
Blind to his purpose, and himself secure
From all suspicion; so he dreads not us

And Their success he must imagine certain.
Nadir will lurk, and to the deadly fray
 Serenely listen; as a careless mariner,
 After his bark is safely moor'd in port,
 In a snug lodging with his buxom bride,
 Over the solace of a humming bowl
 Hears with composure the rude tempest blow.

OFFICER.

But if the tempest rises in a whirlwind,
 Swells the rough tide beyond its usual bounds,
 Unroofs the top and levels the foundation
 Of his snug lodging——Then the careless mariner
 Had better stay'd without, and stood expos'd,
 Where prudence might provide for future safety.

SALEH.

Doubtless, my friend. But in his snug retreat
 He wou'd be happy, till the ruin came.
 Guard!—who approaches?

GUARD (*without*)

One from General *Bashi*. (*Enter Messenger.*)

SALEH.

How goes the fight?

MESSENGER.

Sir, most unwish'd.——At first,
 The fell barbarians came like furies on,
 In some disorder, thinking us secure.
 They felt deception. This gave us advantage.
 In due procinct, we firmly stood our ground.
 Awhile we dealt destruction foot to foot,
 With equal spirit, and with equal loss:

Until

Until, at length, the Georgians (though most brave ;
But languid from the rigors of a prison)
Gave way !——Alas!——There's little hope of safety !

SALEH.

Oh, curse on fortune!—Let us die reveng'd !
Burst instantly upon the Tyrant's guards,
And make secure of Him. He shall not triumph !
The greatest comfort I can feel in death
Will be to think, he perish'd by my hand.

MESSENGER.

The orders are, that you abide your station.
All is not lost. One solitary hope
Depends on your obedience.

[Ex. Messeng.]

SALEH.

Doating fool !
Abide ! for what ? We've nothing to defend !
Like curs'd apostate spirits, fallen from heaven,
We've nothing left us, but a wretched being,
Which gladly I cou'd lose, but for the pleasure
Of wreaking vengeance on our great destroyer.
Our good is to make others like ourselves,
Immensely curs'd ; and in a bitter rage
Spread wide stupendous ruin.

OFFICER.

Worthy General !
We still have pow'r for that.—If ought remains,
Let us not forfeit it.——Another courier !

SALEH.

Another courier, man ! another knell
To toll our dissolution. Shall we fall

Here, like tame dastards ; and let *Nadir* live
A merry gossip at our funeral feast ? (*Enter Messenger.*)

MESSENGER.

All's well ! Illustrious Leader !—Victory now
Covers the Persians.—Glory to our arms !

SALEH.

Heav'n ! Is it possible !

MESSENGER.

'Tis strange, but true.
To our surprize and joy, just at the moment,
When all appear'd as lost, their largest body,
Their most puissant and victorious wing,
As if instinct with some divine impulse,
Wheel'd off at once, and fled. The cause of this,
Which seem'd to us, at first, a prodigy,
Was, as I just have learn'd, discovery made
That *Abdul* had assassinated *Nizam*.
On this desertion, we huzza'd and rallied.
The fight was doubtful still : Their remnant fought
With unabated ardor.—But lo, *Abdul*,
As lion-like, he thunder'd in the van,
Sternly exhorting to the work of death,
Was told, though not till some space afterwards,
That all the troops of *Nizam* had deserted :
He started—stood amaz'd—spread out his hands—
Cry'd in despairing accent—"All is lost !"
"O *Nizam* !—Thou'rt aveng'd !"—Then with a
bound,
Frantic he flung his sabre in the crowd,
Fell flat, and so expir'd.

SALEH.

SALEH.

So dy'd a villain.

MESSANGER.

Soon the barbarians fainted with dismay.

They now retire.—Haste you!—Make sure of Nadir.

[Exit Messenger.]

SALEH.

With all my soul!—March to the tent of Nadir.

Exeunt omnes.

SCENE changes to Nadir's Tent.

Enter Myrza and Georgian Slave.

MYRZA.

What! did the Georgians shrink? forbid it honor!
Did Georgians shrink?—A proof indeed, that slavery
Tames ev'n the noblest spirits into baseness.

SLAVE.

They fought, my Prince, most bravely for the juncture:
The Tartars almost doubled them in number.
Nor had they, Sir, your animating presence,
Which us'd to rouse, like an inspiring God.

MYRZA.

The Tyrant's guards may still prolong the strife.
Do you, my brave old warriors, whom I found
Slaves in this Tyrant's tent, support your Prince.
By all your loyal love, to me oft vow'd,
By all your anguish for your ruin'd country,
By all your detestation of this Tyrant,

By

By all your hopes of liberty and glory,
I now conjure you, shew that you are men,
Behave like Georgians!—Draw your sturdy sabres:
Fall on the Tyrant's guards, and drive them out,
Bare to the stroke of *Saleb*.

(They brandish their sabres.)

March along!————

Oh, why do I look back, and linger here?
Shou'd war's grim fury kindle thro' this tent——
A sigh for dear *Circassia*!

Enter Circassia.

CIRCASSIA.

Myrza call'd me?————

He did; I heard his voice: I know it well:
I hear it sooner ten times than another's,
With such sweet tremor it impels my soul.

MYRZA.

'Tis I, fair creature!—Arm yourself with courage:
Deliverance or death is hard at hand. [*Ex. Myrza, &c.*

(Slave left with Circassia.)

CIRCASSIA.

What danger now, what death does he encounter?
I'll follow: 'twixt their swords and his dear breast
I'll plant my own.——I will!

SLAVE. (*Stops her.*)

No, Lady, no!

I must detain you here. The work is short.

Myrza will soon return, or we soon fall.

A dreadful storm of battle rushes on.

Be still and tarry: safety must be here,

If

If any where nigh such a rapid whirlwind.
 Preserve yourself, dear Lady, for your *Myrza*,
 Shou'd he return victorious: Loss of You
 Wou'd render victory a defeat to him.

CIRCASSIA.

I must partake with him!—Slave! let me pass!
 Return! Return!—Return's impossible!

SLAVE.

Hope not, fair Lady!—*Myrza* may return.

CIRCASSIA.

Love and despair exasperate his soul
 To be reveng'd and perish.

SLAVE.

Not so, Madam.
 There's chance, at least, of safety and deliverance.

CIRCASSIA.

Thou dost but mock me. Off!—I will pursue him!

Enter Myrza.

MYRZA.

Joy, my *Circassia*! Victory!—All are safe!
 Now on our woes Heav'n looks with pity down;
 Let us with gratitude look up, adoring!

CIRCASSIA.

Accept my ardent thanks! (*in a devout attitude.*)

Enter Saleh, with Soldiers.

SALEH.

Who's here?—What!—*Myrza*?
 Ha! *Myrza* from the dead?

MYRZA.

MYRZA. *(sings)*
 Sir, living *Myrza*.
 See!—Living to serve You in time of need.
(holds up a bloody sabre.)

SALEH.
 Astonishing! ——— Good Prince! I'm overjoy'd
 To see you on the shore of life! ——— *(embrace.)*
 Most welcome!
 'Twas you, I find, who drove the Tyrant's guards
 Full in the bitter edges of our sabres?

MYRZA,
 It was, my *Saleh*.

SALEH, (again embracing Myrza,)
 Valiant Prince! I thank thee!
 Here's ample reinforcement to thy vengeance.
 This foul of mischief, this incarnate fiend,
 Has fill'd the world with misery too long.
 Fearless, will I now lay his furious spirit
 In the profound abyss.——Where is the Tyrant?

SLAVE.
 In his bed-apartment.

SALEH.
 Here, *Myrza*, comes the hoary faint, thy friend.
 We brought him hither, that his presence might
 Relieve thy Lady in this scene of blood.

(Enter Patriarch. Exit Saleh, &c.)

CIRCASSIA.
 O bless'd be heaven!
MYRZA.

MYRZA (*embracing Patriarch.*)

My guide! my friend! my father!

PATR.

My son! my prince!——I thank the great Disposer,
My Prince survives.——

(*Speaking to Circassia*)

Fair sufferer! Sweet maid!
The joy of *Myrza's* heart! the hope of mine!
This dreadful night will terminate our woes.
The Persians will restore our gracious prince
To *Georgia's* throne. *Circassia* must partake
In *Myrza's* honors; and, I gladly trust,
Will both deserve them and enjoy them long.
Henceforward may you live in all the good,
That virtue, rank, and fortune can bestow.
In this enlivening hope, I give you joy.

CIRCASSIA.

Right reverend Sire! you give me joy indeed.

Enter Zara.

ZARA.

Murder!—O murder!—Save me, O *Circassia*!
Save, save your friend!

CIRCASSIA.

Here, *Zara*, all are safe.——
This lady claims protection and deserves it. (*To Myrza.*)

MYRZA.

Most gladly granted—Ever while your *Myrza*
Has pow'r to give it.

ZARA.

ZARA.

My devoutest thanks ! *(Cries within.)*

MYRZA.

Hark ! There's the prelude to the Tyrant's exit !
His blameless eunuchs perish.

PATR.

Saleh's rage
Makes no **Distinction.**

SALEH.

(within.)

Flee, ye puny Varlets !

NADIR.

(within.)

What's this mad Uproar ?

PATR.

Hark ! the voice of *Nadir.*

NADIR.

Who are you Traitors ?

SALEH.

Take this answer, Tyrant ! *(noise within.)*

NADIR.

Mercy ! have mercy ! I'll forgive you All.

SALEH.

You've shewn no mercy ; therefore you deserve none.
(Groans within.)

PATR.

Ah, there he dies ! he dies !—his haughty soul
Launches, reluctant, to the nether world,

There

There to revise his actions ; and await
The awful sentence of the Judge supreme.
His boasted glories will be turn'd to shame ;
His splendid triumphs to eternal horrors.

Enter Bashi. and Saleh meeting.

SALEH.

Bashi, good friend ! the Tyrant is no more.

BASHI.

Then all is well !—A blessed night indeed !

SALEH.

What's doing in the camp ?

BASHI.

We stand in truce.—

When *Abdul* fell, the Tartars straight retir'd ;
But still they fought. We made it be proclaim'd
The Shah is dead. On that the slaughter ceas'd.
The Tartars still refuse to lay down arms,
Until they see the body of the Tyrant.

Enter Soldiers, bearing Nadir's body.

SALEH.

See—here they bring it. (*Soldiers lay down the body.*)

BASHI.

There a Tyrant lies !

MYRZA.

He that, but now, stood high in pomp and pow'r,
Ordering and acting like a minor God ;
Millions of mortals bending to his feet—
He that, but now, pervaded distant realms,

G

Command.

Commanded kings, and shook with awe the world—
Alas!—What is he?—

SALEH.

What a Tyrant ought!

PATR.

Ye Persians hear me—and without offence—
Your own corruptions gave the monster birth;
That tyranny, which prostrate lies in *Nadir*.
Experience shews you, such a lawless guest
Devours your substance, drinks your genial blood,
Lays waste your country, and destroys you worse
Than any foreign foes. Thus warn'd, beware,
Lest many Tyrants rise instead of one;
Lest anarchy effect your utter fall.—
Let all aspirers look on *Nadir's* fate;
And tremble at the giddy heights he trod.
His life was wretched; cursed is his death.

By such destructive strides his greatness rose,
His country, friends, and family turn'd foes:
All nature round him roused to rebel;
Hated of heav'n and earth, the Tyrant fell.
Who wou'd not, rather than his fortunes try,
Be born a Peasant, and a Peasant die?



THE END.

